EVALUATION REPORT

The Confident Resilient Children Project

Pilot study report

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YOUTH ENDOWMENT FUND

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About the evaluator

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Executive summary

The project

The CRC Project aims to support Years Five and Six (ages nine to 11) children to build resilience and confidence and keep them safe from exploitation and criminality. Delivered by the Titan Partnership, together with Lime and Emerge Leadership, the programme combines universal and targeted elements. Teachers are trained to deliver 'Choices', a universal component where all pupils work through interactive digital stories over 11 weekly sessions. The stories provide a proxy for children to discuss situations they may face and break down the decision-making process to support better choices. Emerge mentors then work with a targeted group of Year Five and Year Six children to deliver 'Postcode to the Globe', which provides weekly group mentoring over eight weeks and, for some, further weekly one-to-one mentoring over four weeks. Delivered by mentors recruited and trained by Emerge Leadership, mentoring sessions flexibly adapt to pupils' needs and include a focus on encouraging children to take responsibility and establish their own goals. Children identified as being at high risk of exploitation and criminality (defined as the most 'at risk' 10% according to well-being data analysis using the Stirling Child Wellbeing Scale (SCWBS) and teacher insight) are selected for mentoring.

YEF funded a pilot evaluation of the CRC Project, building on the previously published feasibility study. The evaluation aimed to explore evidence of feasibility (including how schools were recruited, how the project was implemented, the challenges and enablers to delivery and the intervention dosage), evidence of promise (including whether there were any changes in children's outcomes or teacher practice) and readiness for trial (ascertaining whether CRC is ready to be evaluated in an efficacy randomised controlled trial and, if so, whether any changes may be required). To explore these questions, the evaluation used a pre- and post-online questionnaire with pupils (including validated outcome measures such as the SCWBS, Me and My Feelings (MAMF) and the Student Resilience Survey (SRS)), collected administrative data relating to pupil demographics and programme attendance, observed CRC training sessions and interviewed five teachers, six CRC champions, four mentors and 35 children. Nine hundred and ninety-seven pupils across 12 schools were included in the evaluation, and the pilot study ran from June 2021 to September 2022. The evaluation took place during the pandemic, requiring both the delivery and evaluation teams to adapt to challenging circumstances.

Key conclusions
CRC is a mature intervention that has been implemented reasonably consistently and is generally in line with the logic model. The overall programme is feasible and acceptable to school staff, mentors and pupils.
Delivery of the group mentoring component was largely delivered as intended and acceptable to mentors, school staff and pupils. However, there were some inconsistencies related to mentoring delivery. While mentoring sessions are designed to be tailored to meet pupils' needs and interests, there were variations in reach and dosage that were not in line with the logic model. There was also a lack of clarity regarding pupil selection for mentoring, with pupils selected for a wide range of reasons and with varying levels of need.
Effective implementation was supported by a range of factors, including the clarity of CRC resources, the responsiveness of the CRC team, tailoring mentoring content to suit pupil needs and having single-gender mentoring groups to aid group dynamics. Challenges included the volume of content to cover in Choices sessions, lack of time available for CRC champion tasks, limitations of iPad usage, more pupils identified as needing support than mentoring spaces available and managing mentoring group dynamics.
Qualitative interview data revealed a wide range of views regarding perceived pupil outcomes. One view was that there had been several changes for pupils, including increased confidence, improved relationships, self-regulation and greater resilience among children. Another view from mentors, CRC champions and teachers was that they were not able to identify outcomes for pupils. The analysis of quantitative outcome measures showed limited change. However, without a counterfactual comparison group, it is not possible to draw conclusions related to the programme's impact.
Ahead of future evaluation, there are several ways in which delivery could be optimised, relating to training and programme delivery. Intervention scalability could also be improved by reducing the teacher burden associated with Choices, ensuring consistency in the dosage and reach of one-on-one mentoring and improving data collection.

Interpretation

CRC is a mature intervention that has been implemented reasonably consistently across schools, teachers and mentors and is generally in line with the logic model. The overall programme is feasible and acceptable to school staff, mentors and pupils. With regards to the Choices component, in the pilot, all Year Five and Year Six pupils across the recruited schools participated. Sessions lasted between 40 and 90 minutes (compared to the intended 60) and were typically delivered weekly for 11 weeks as anticipated. Most schools received in-person training (with some receiving online training as a result of COVID-19), and the training was well received by teachers. As intended, Choices sessions were delivered by teachers, who adopted a facilitator delivery style, supporting pupils to read Choices stories in small groups. Some adaptations were made by teachers, including adapting slides and lesson plans to ensure they were appropriate and to aid delivery.

150 pupils (15% of the overall sample) received mentoring, and 20 of these 150 pupils received one-on-one mentoring. These figures are in line with the overall target for the proportion of children to receive this component. Mentors undertook initial training followed by ongoing training every four to six weeks. This training was perceived to effectively prepare mentors for delivery. While mentors' delivery styles were personalised, and while mentoring session content and activities were adapted to suit pupil needs (as intended), group session content reflected the key aims of the CRC Project. Mentoring sessions were delivered weekly, and those receiving group mentoring attended an average of 7.3 sessions (the intention was eight sessions), while those receiving one-on-one mentoring received an average of 3.75 sessions (the intention was four sessions). Mentors were generally acceptable to school staff and pupils and were described as friendly, skilled, engaging and kind. Mentoring session content was also seen as relevant to the challenges pupils faced. However, there were also several inconsistencies related to mentoring delivery, specifically variations in reach and dosage that were not in line with the logic model. For example, the number of one-on-one sessions attended by one-on-one mentoring pupils ranged from one to eight (compared to the target of four). In future delivery, a compliance measure could be introduced to reduce this inconsistency and ensure core parameters are met.

Effective implementation in this study was supported by a range of factors, including the clarity of CRC resources, the responsiveness of the CRC team, tailoring mentoring content to suit pupil needs and having single-gender mentoring groups to aid group dynamics. Challenges included the volume of content to cover in Choices sessions; the limitations of iPad usage; the limited time available for CRC champion tasks; the unsuitable timing of emails, including lesson plans for teachers; more pupils being identified as needing support than mentoring spaces available; logistics (communication with schools and inappropriate spaces for mentoring); lack of clarity regarding pupil selection for mentoring and managing mentoring group dynamics. Qualitative interview data revealed a wide range of views regarding perceived pupil outcomes. One view (from all groups of participants) was that there had been a number of changes for pupils, including increased confidence, better relationships, self-regulation and greater resilience among children. Another view from mentors, CRC champions and teachers was that they were not able to identify outcomes for pupils. The analysis of quantitative outcome measures shows limited changes. However, without a counterfactual comparison group, it is not possible to draw conclusions related to the programme's impact.

Ahead of future evaluation, there are several ways in which delivery could be optimised, relating to training and programme delivery. For instance, teachers expressed a preference for further guidance on facilitating classroom discussion and managing pupil behaviour, changes to content (such as more information on the transition to secondary school) and increased interactive content in-session activities. Intervention scalability could also be improved by reducing the teacher burden associated with Choices, ensuring consistency in the dosage and reach of one-on-one mentoring and improving data collection and monitoring. With regards to the teacher burden, teachers reported that the volume of content for each Choices session was often too large and noted challenges in completing all administrative tasks. They were also unsure about the extent to which they could adapt resources and prioritise content.

Introduction

Background

Titan Partnership[1], supported by Lime and Emerge Leadership, was awarded a YEF grant to deliver the CRC Project, a primary school intervention for pupils in Years Five and Six across Birmingham.

As part of this grant, NatCen conducted a feasibility study of the CRC Project during the academic year 2019/20 (Bury et al., 2022). The study assessed the early implementation of the intervention to support decisions about intervention refinement and a suitable research design for this larger-scale pilot evaluation. The feasibility study concluded that the intervention was broadly perceived as positive by implementers and intervention recipients and was implemented consistently across schools, teachers and mentors, in line with the logic model. Therefore, there was agreement that the feasibility study met the criteria to transition from the feasibility stage to the pilot stage. Some small areas for potential refinement of the CRC Project were identified. Recommendations included ensuring teachers, champions and mentors understood both components of the intervention, providing enough time to cover all content and highlighting the outcomes and benefits for teachers and schools. This pilot explores the delivery of the CRC Project, taking an implementation and process evaluation (IPE) methods approach.

This section sets out the background of the CRC Project, starting with the 'story' of the developers and how the project began. The project aims are then introduced, along with the underlying evidence and rationale for these. The last section sets out the approaches used in the intervention and situates these in the wider literature.

Titan Partnership

The Titan Partnership's experience with young people at risk of offending, including the CEO's leadership on various panels and sponsorship of alternative providers, equipped it with the necessary viewpoints to tackle the rising issue of youth violence. In 2019, both nationally and locally, serious violence, including knife crime, saw a significant increase. Birmingham witnessed a 19% rise in knife crime, and the levels of youth violence also increased by 10% during the same period[2]. With the Community Safety Partnership prioritising the reduction of violence and exploitation, Titan saw an urgency to explore projects that could meet the needs of schools and the wider Birmingham youth population. The CRC Project was born out of these conversations and aimed to help children make positive choices, keeping them safe and less vulnerable to exploitation and criminality. By addressing this crucial issue, Titan could help schools and the community tackle the problem of youth violence and reduce youth criminality.

Project aims and rationale

The aim of the CRC Project is to help children to develop strategies that build resilience and confidence and make positive choices to keep them safe and less vulnerable to exploitation and criminality. It also aims to support the transition from primary to secondary school. The intervention has a universal and targeted

[1] The Titan Partnership is a charity. It provides a membership education network of primary and secondary schools, FE colleges, universities and private training providers across Birmingham. It runs a range of activities, including projects for pupils, such as the CRC Project, and teacher training and continual professional development opportunities.

[2] Birmingham Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2019-2022.

component. The project logic model sets out the activities (see Figure 1) and intended outcomes (see Figure 2) for pupils, teachers, mentors and schools[3].

The CRC Project delivery methodology presumes that all young people are potentially vulnerable to exploitation, crime and violence, and, therefore, the universal element (called Choices) is delivered to all children in participating schools. The targeted element (called Postcode to the Globe or mentoring) then provides focused support for those children who, through well-being data and teacher insight, are identified as higher risk and, therefore, potentially a greater cause for concern. This intervention design reflects an approach known as 'proportionate universalism'[4] (Van Vliet, 2018).

A range of factors can contribute to vulnerability, including social disadvantage, poverty, lack of access to education and employment opportunities, and exposure to adverse childhood experiences. Research has shown that young people who experience these risk factors are more likely to be exposed to exploitation, crime and violence. For example, there is evidence that young people who experience social disadvantage, unstable housing or had contact with the child welfare system are more likely to be exposed to exploitation and trafficking (Finkelhor et al., 2007; Greenbaum et al., 2017). In a similar vein, a combination of early aggressive or risky behaviour and social isolation are risk factors for later violent and criminal behaviour. Evidence suggests that children and young people with challenging home lives (including witnessing physical or emotional violence or living in economic hardship) are more susceptible to risk-taking behaviours, which in turn increases the risk of involvement in exploitation, crime and violence (Early Intervention Foundation, 2015).

However, while some young people may be more vulnerable to exploitation, crime and violence than others due to risk factors such as these, the developers argue that all young people are potentially at risk and that prevention and intervention efforts should be targeted at all young people rather than just those perceived to be at highest risk. The evidence for this draws in part on developments in neuroscience, which depict adolescence as a period of dramatic changes in the brain[5] and a period that is, therefore, crucial for developing good social and emotional skills and habits. Indeed, the literature points to an association between children's social and emotional skills and crime in later life. A review by the Early Intervention Foundation found a 'very significant body of work' showing the association between self-control and self-regulation (and similar concepts) in childhood and many domains of adult life, including mental health, life satisfaction, well-being and crime (2015: 8). Similarly, there is academic evidence suggesting that individuals with higher levels of confidence and resilience are less likely to engage in criminal behaviour or be victimised by crime. For example, a study by Masten et al. (2005) found that low levels of resilience were associated with an increased likelihood of delinquent behaviour among adolescents.

[3] The logic model also includes two outcomes for parents, but these were not included in the study protocol (we did not measure parent outcomes as part of the pilot evaluation).

[4] Proportionate universalism relates to the idea that interventions should be universal but can be delivered in proportion to individual need.

[5] See for example, Shatkin, J. (2018).

The universal approach to prevention provides interventions and support to all adolescents, regardless of whether they are exhibiting signs of aggression, delinquency or social isolation, with the aim of preventing the development of more serious problems in the future.

Intervention methodology and supporting evidence

By focusing on the development of social and emotional skills alongside behavioural outcomes, a universal school-based intervention like the Choices programme can reduce the propensity to violence by tackling problematic behaviours before they become entrenched (Clarke et al., 2015) and increase positive life outcomes (including good health and social well-being, educational attainment and employment). By developing children's executive functioning (including flexible thinking and self-control) through intervention activities, children will become more sophisticated decision-makers and be better able to navigate the challenges they face during adolescence.

This is facilitated by developing an understanding in the sessions of:

- how identities are formed,
- when and how outside influences affect them, and
- human psychological needs.

Practical sessions present hypothetical scenarios that prepare children for dealing with real-life situations. There is evidence that this can be an effective way to enable children and young people to apply strategies they learn outside the classroom setting (Linnenbrink-Garcia and Pintrich, 2003; Prado et al., 2008; Sanderson and Roberts, 2003). For example, one study (Sanderson and Roberts, 2003) examined the effectiveness of a hypothetical scenario intervention designed to improve children's conflict resolution skills. The intervention involved presenting children with hypothetical scenarios in which they were asked to identify the problem, generate solutions and evaluate the effectiveness of each solution. The study found that children who participated in the intervention showed significant improvements in their conflict resolution skills compared to children who did not participate in the intervention.

The Choices sessions (universal element) are delivered by practitioners (including teachers and teaching assistants) who are trained in a facilitative style of delivery based on dialogic pedagogy (Skidmore and Murakami, 2016)[6]. Evidence indicates that dialogic pedagogies result in better engagement and outcomes for pupils and educators across a range of curricular domains (Education Endowment Foundation, 2017). For instance, teacher feedback from previous Choices sessions, run across the country, suggests the sessions create safe spaces in which safeguarding disclosures are more common than during other (more didactically oriented) styles of classroom activity.

The targeted component of one-on-one and group mentoring provides additional support for a selected group of children. The mentoring process is designed to follow and reinforce the learning and the content delivered in the Choices programme. To enable that to happen, mentors receive training on the content of the Choices programme so that they are aware of the key messages, the protagonists, the outcomes and the delivery style of the Choices programme. Mentors are encouraged to link these messages to the relevant mentoring session.

[6] Dialogic teaching involves ongoing talks between teacher and pupils, not just teacher presentation. This approach encourages pupils to play an active role in their learning and to use their voices to discuss, reason and debate within their lessons.

The CRC project methodology is situated in the wider literature in different ways. In relation to the overall approach, the YEF toolkit, which summarises the evidence underpinning different intervention approaches, refers to interventions similar to the CRC programme as 'social skills training' and, based on a review of the evidence, finds that 'the impact of social skills training on preventing violence is likely to be high. On average, social skills training programmes have reduced the number of children involved in crime by 32%'. It also finds that these programmes are most effective with children aged nine to 10, which is similar to the age group for the CRC programme[7].

In relation to Postcode to the Globe, the YEF toolkit notes that 'mentoring is likely to have a desirable impact on substance misuse, behavioural difficulties, educational outcomes and self-esteem' and that it is most effective when used with children and young people at higher risk of involvement in crime. Mentoring schemes are given a 'moderate' rating in terms of their impact on violent crime (based on a review of eight evaluations)[8]. The toolkit also notes that for social skills training, targeted programmes working with children who were already demonstrating a need for more intensive support have achieved greater impacts than universal programmes[9]. There is also evidence to suggest that mentoring programmes which are integrated with other interventions can be more effective than standalone mentoring programmes. DuBois et al. (2002) found that the duration of the mentoring relationship becomes less important when mentoring is part of a wider support programme. Similarly, there is some evidence to support identified benefits of short-term mentoring interventions for young people who require support and guidance. Karcher and Nakkula (2010) found that short-term mentoring interventions can result in improvements in youth self-esteem and problem behaviours, such as aggression.

The rest of this chapter sets out the key aspects of the intervention in more detail, followed by the background to the evaluation. The report goes on to describe the methods used to conduct the research. The findings chapters are split into three sections, covering evidence of feasibility, evidence of promise and readiness for trial. The Evidence of feasibility and Evidence of promise chapters present findings from the pilot data, while the Readiness for trial and Conclusions chapters explore and analyse the implications of these findings.

Intervention

The CRC Project is a primary school intervention for Year Five and Year Six pupils, which includes a universal and targeted component. It aims to help children develop strategies to make positive choices to keep them safe and less vulnerable to exploitation and criminality. It also aims to support with the transition from primary to secondary school[10].

CRC champions and Year Five and Year Six teachers are trained and supported by Lime to deliver Choices, the universal component, where pupils work through 'digital stories' over 11 weekly sessions. The CRC champion is the project lead at the school, usually a member of the senior leadership team or a Year Five or

[7] https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/toolkit/social-skills-training/

[8] https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/toolkit/mentoring-2/

[9] https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/toolkit/social-skills-training/

[10] For more details of the intervention, visit: https://www.titan.org.uk/activities/confident-resilient-children-project/

Year Six phase leader or teacher. Paid mentors are trained and supported by Emerge to deliver Postcode to the Globe mentoring, the targeted component. Pupils deemed to be the 10% at highest risk (as assessed by the CRC Project team and school, using teacher insight, well-being data collected by Lime and a Case Conference Referral approach with the school champion) receive weekly targeted group mentoring sessions over eight weeks, and a smaller proportion (20% of those receiving group mentoring) go on to receive one-on-one mentoring over four sessions, delivered weekly. The pupils are selected for one-on-one support from the overall targeted group on the basis of greater need in terms of vulnerability to exploitation (according to teacher insight). In a few cases, pupils are selected for one-on-one mentoring by their teacher because a group environment would not be suitable, often because of personal or family circumstances[11].

The identification process for group and one-on-one mentoring consists of using the SCWBS, triangulated with the richness of understanding and lived experience teachers have about their pupils to highlight children deemed to be a 'cause for concern'.

Lime's research hypothesis is that CRC champions can use SCWBS data to glean better insight in three ways:

1. Agreement: The result confirms and corroborates what's already known about a pupil.
2. Augmentation: The result adds richness to what's known or suspected.
3. Surprise: A child's well-being was considered satisfactory, but the result suggests otherwise.

Data from the SCWBS and teacher insight are brought together through convening a meeting, referred to as the 'case conference', to discuss what it means in terms of individual pupils and any school-wide or individual teachers' approaches. To do this, it is critical to encourage dialogue between CRC champions, class teachers and support staff. Between them, they know the children best, and by bringing their combined knowledge to a meeting, a more informed assessment can be made in terms of which pupils would benefit most from the targeted (mentoring) intervention. The case conference process starts when Lime provides the 'Pupil Well-Being Report' based on the SCWBS, with instructions for teachers on how to use this to prepare for the case conference.

Data from the SCWBS includes information about a pupil's emotional and social well-being, as well as their access to resources and support. This is a useful single metric for well-being, which enables teachers and the CRC Project team to easily identify those pupils whose well-being may be low. Research indicates that low well-being is correlated with vulnerability, which places pupils with low well-being at greater risk (Espelage et al., 2013). For instance, a study by Sabina et al. (2015) used data from a national survey of adolescents to examine the relationship between mental health problems and the risk of sexual violence victimisation. The study found that adolescents who reported symptoms of depression or anxiety were at higher risk of experiencing victimisation than those who did not report these symptoms. The authors suggested that identifying and addressing mental health problems may be an important component of prevention efforts aimed at reducing victimisation among adolescents. In responding to this report, the CRC Project team have also pointed to evidence on the relationship between low well-being in adolescence and future criminality, referencing Swedish panel data studies in particular (Stattin at al, 1997; Alm and Estrada, 2018).

The data from the SCWBS does not tell the whole story, but it is used by the CRC Project as a systematic way of highlighting pupils who need further consideration on the part of teachers and pastoral staff. For example,

[11] The way that one-on-one mentoring pupils were selected was clarified retrospectively by the CRC Project team.

if a pupil's well-being data shows that they are experiencing high levels of stress, anxiety or depression, this may indicate that they are struggling and may consequently be more vulnerable to exploitation or crime. The case conference process means that rather than use SCWBS in isolation, the intervention also draws on the contextual knowledge of local experts, such as teachers and CRC champions.

The logic model sets out the intervention activities (see Figure 1) and intended outcomes (see Figure 2).

Figure 1. CRC Project activities

Confident Resilient Children Logic Model: the intervention

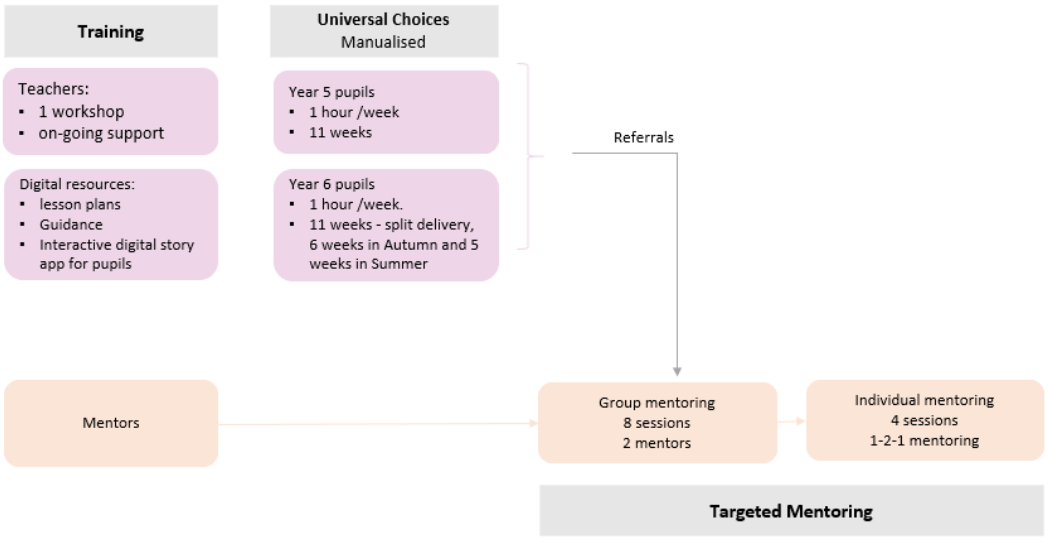
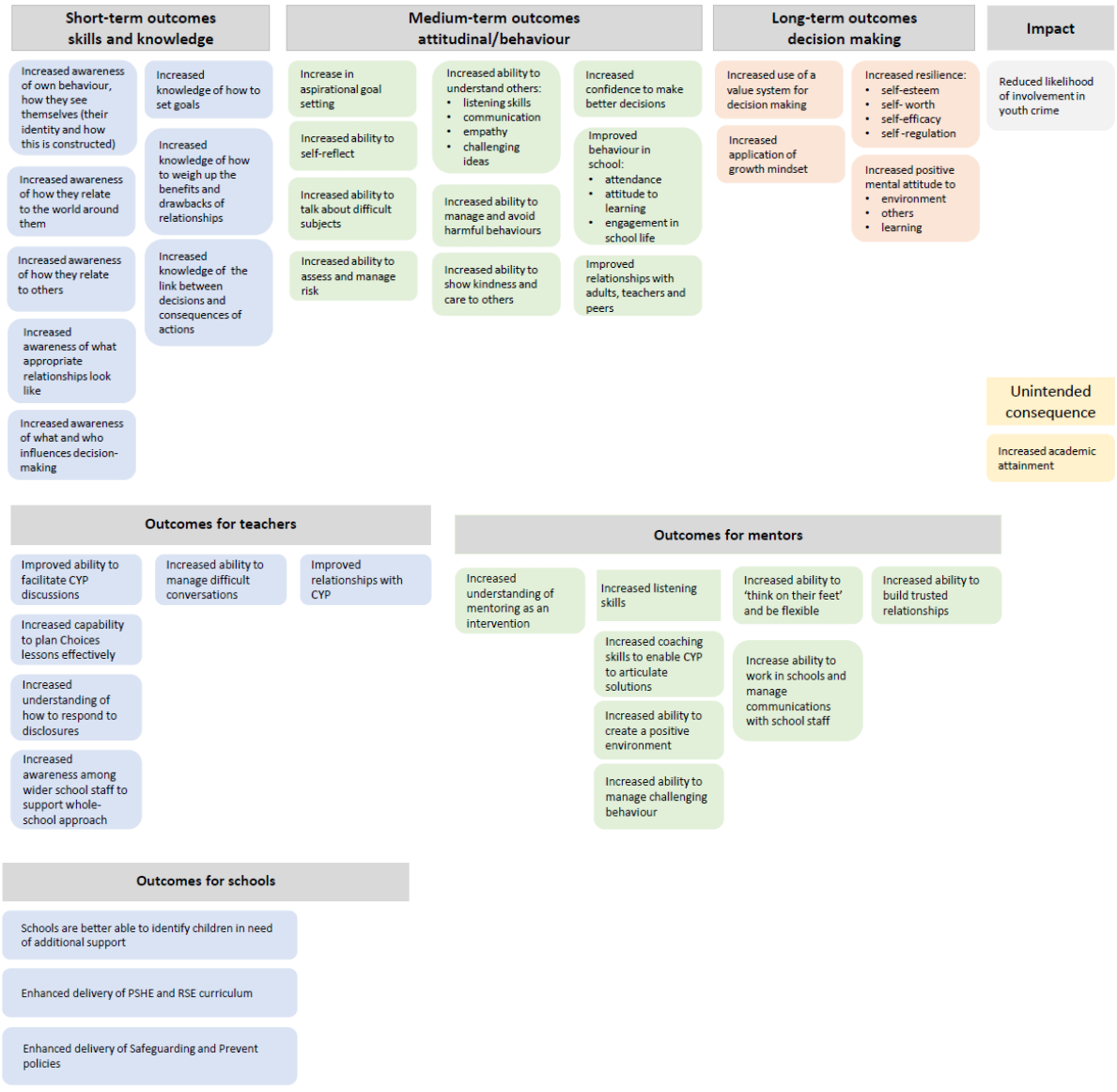


Figure 2. CRC Project logic model: intended outcomes for pupils, teachers, mentors and schools



Choices: universal component

Choices, the universal component of the CRC Project, is a classroom-based intervention delivered by teachers. Teachers are trained by Lime to understand the content and also to adopt a facilitative style of delivery that advocates a dialogic pedagogy. All teaching materials and learning resources are available at the start of the intervention. They also receive ongoing support, including weekly emails, ad hoc training and periodic masterclasses, to deliver this manualised intervention to the whole class. See Table 1 for an overview of the Choices programme sessions.

Pupils work through a series of interactive digital stories, which they read on iPads. These stories and their characters provide a proxy for children to discuss the situations the characters find themselves in, the implication of those situations and the possible responses to them. Using a mixture of individual, small group and whole-class activities, pupils are then led through a process that not only breaks down the components of decision-making (focused on identity formation, an understanding of influence and an examination of the basic psychological needs that all people have) but also layers on the practical skills believed to contribute to 'executive neural functioning' (calibration of risk and reward, problem-solving, prioritising, thinking ahead, self-evaluation, long-term planning and regulation of emotion).

Year Five pupils work through Marcus's Story, and Year Six pupils work through Kwan's Story, which builds on the Year Five materials. In the former, pupils are introduced to a framework for decision-making and the components that impact it. In the latter, that framework is put under stress in order to prepare children for the transition to secondary school, a pivotal time that often marks the onset of risky or problematic behaviour (Bailey and Baines, 2012). The stories present pupils with practical scenarios, as well as moral and social dilemmas, in an engaging digital format to build the knowledge, skills and motivation to make good choices, regardless of the context in which young people find themselves.

Table 1. Overview of Choices programme sessions

Choices sessions	
Year Five	
Session	Session aims
Session 1 Preparing for the programme	Introduces the programme, explains and devises ground rules, defines key language around choice and teases them with the story
Sessions 2 and 3 Who am I?	How identity is formed
Session 4 What influences me?	How we are influenced by those around us
Session 5 What makes me who I am?	The impact that basic psychological needs have on our choices
Sessions 6, 7 and 8 Me in the world	The consequences of how we communicate to and with the world
Sessions 9 and 10 Who I choose to be	Poses the question of whether we want to be the ones to make our own choices
Session 11 Building our own better future	Strategies and skills necessary to help themselves and each other to achieve this
Year Six	
Session	Session aims
Session 1 Preparing for change	A review of the Year Five module, defining key language around choice, a refresh of the major concepts/themes and re-establishes ground rules. It also provides an introduction for pupils who are new to the programme
Session 2 Our world changes	Examines how times of pressure, anxiety or change can influence our capacity to make 'good choices'
Session 3 Finding our way	Explores risk and risk-taking and managing pressure
Session 4 Choosing who we want to be with	Explores what makes people important to us and why
Session 5 Making our choices	Considers the unintended consequence of our actions
Session 6 Being who we choose	Focuses on developing a growth mindset
Sessions 7 and 8 Understanding ourselves	Noticing our inner monologues and reframing situations positively
Session 9 Preparing for success	Thinking of the transition to secondary school and using the skills learnt so far
Sessions 10 and 11 Our transition journey	Introduces the appreciative inquiry approach and planning for a positive future

Postcode to the Globe: targeted component

Postcode to the Globe, the targeted component of the CRC Project, is a mentoring programme. Trained mentors deliver group or one-on-one mentoring to a pre-defined proportion of pupils. Pupils with a greater need or more at risk are identified through the referral process, selected at case conference meetings between the school champion and CRC Project coordinators and selected to take part. In this report, we generally refer to Postcode to the Globe as 'the targeted component' or 'mentoring'.

Mentors work through a lesson plan and resources with pupils. Mentors have the flexibility to adapt content to meet pupils' needs. The sessions aim to raise aspiration and achievement through building belief and increasing intrinsic motivation to learn. They encourage participants to take responsibility and establish goals for themselves.

Emerge Leadership recruit, employ, train, support and deploy mentors to participating schools.

Research questions

The purpose of the pilot evaluation was to explore the delivery of the CRC Project to inform learning for future delivery and future large-scale evaluation of programme effectiveness. The evaluation design brings together quantitative and qualitative data collection activities to address research questions under three key dimensions: evidence of feasibility, evidence of promise and readiness for trial.

Evidence of feasibility

- How and why schools are recruited to the intervention?
- How is the CRC Project implemented in practice, and what adaptations are made to delivery?
- What are the challenges and enablers to delivering the intervention as intended?
- What is the intervention reach and dosage?
- Is the intervention acceptable to teachers, mentors and children? How engaged are teachers, mentors and children in the intervention?

Evidence of promise

- What is the change in children's social and emotional outcomes and resilience?
- What changes, if any, are made to teacher and mentor practice and school support for children at risk of becoming vulnerable to criminal exploitation as a result of the programme?
- Are there any adverse or unintended consequences?

Readiness for trial

- What changes, if any, are needed to the intervention logic model?
- What changes are required to optimise delivery?
- Can the intervention be delivered at scale?
- Have suitable outcome measures been identified for evaluation?

Success criteria and/or targets

The aim of the pilot evaluation is to explore evidence of feasibility, evidence of promise and assess readiness for trial. In order to achieve these aims, the pilot would need to meet the following success criteria:

- Outcome measures show low attrition (at least 80% complete data at the endpoint).
- There are no systematic issues with missing item data.
- Pupil pre-post survey data show mean improvement (improved well-being, reduced emotional and behavioural difficulties, increased resilience). Since there is no comparison group, this will likely be an overestimate of efficacy (including, change due to regression to the mean).
- Selected outcome measures are internally valid (as determined by Cronbach's α and McDonald's ω; Flora, 2020).

- Selected outcome measures correlate with each other in the expected direction, e.g. resilience is negatively correlated with emotional and behavioural difficulties.
- Evidence gathered corroborates the logic model under these terms:
  - All evaluation schools implement the CRC Project in full, with delivery across schools sufficiently consistent (e.g., number of lessons, topics covered and the format used).
  - Qualitative data suggests the intervention is acceptable and engaging across delivery staff and children; there is perceived progress towards the short-term outcomes for children, teachers and mentors.

Ethical review

Ethical approval was obtained from the NatCen Research Ethics Committee in August 2020, ahead of recruitment and data collection.

We (the NatCen research team) provided participants (schools, CRC champions, teachers, mentors and pupils) with information sheets outlining what the evaluation involved and that participation was voluntary (see Appendix A in the Technical Appendix). Information sheets contained a link to a privacy notice on the NatCen website. In addition, ahead of all interviews and focus groups, we sought consent from participants and briefed them on the purpose of the research and how their data would be processed and used. We reassured participants that they would not be named in any outputs and that we would endeavour to protect their confidentiality.

Mentors were offered a £30 Love2shop voucher as a thank you for their time, as they are paid for mentoring activity only.

Data protection

NatCen was the data processor and data controller for this evaluation. Lime was the data processor for the pupil survey data. Lime, Emerge Leadership and schools were the data controllers for the pupil administrative data they each provided to Titan to then share with NatCen (via NatCen's secure file transfer service) for the evaluation. It was the responsibility of the data controllers to decide on the legal basis for data sharing. The legal basis was legitimate interest. This means that NatCen believed there was a good reason to collect and manage this data and that this data was needed to evaluate and learn about the CRC Project. Using this data did not interfere with individuals' interests, rights or freedoms.

NatCen was the data controller for personal data collected during the qualitative research activities. Participants received a link to the privacy notice available on the NatCen website, which provided further information on how we used the data we collected, what their rights were as research participants and how they could withdraw their data from the study if they wished.

Lime prepared a pupil-level wide quantitative dataset, including pre- and post-intervention test scores, information on the intervention received (attendance at sessions) and personal data (first and last name, date of birth, unique pupil reference number (UPN)) and pupil characteristics (gender, ethnicity and school year). NatCen carried out further data management and cleaning before starting the analysis.

At the end of the project, the dataset will be securely transferred to the Department of Education (DfE). The DfE will match children to the records held in the National Pupil Database (NPD) using the personal data collected. After matching, the personal data will be deleted and replaced with their unique Pupil Matching

Reference number (PMR) held in the NPD. The DfE will then release the pseudonymised data to the Office for National Statistics (ONS), where it will be held securely in the Secure Research Service (SRS).

All personal information, and any other data held, will be securely deleted from NatCen records a year after the study is completed (in December 2023).

Project team/stakeholders

Table 2. Overview of the delivery team

Delivery team		
Name	Title and institution	Role
Carolyn Chapman-Lees	Chief Executive Officer, Titan Partnership	Overall CRC Project Lead
Mark Hill	Project Coordinator, Titan Partnership (from March 2020)	Project Coordinator
Mark Ashfield	Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Lime	Choices
Jo Broughton	Projects and Partnerships Lead, Lime	Choices, School Delivery Lead
Errol Lawson	Founder, Emerge Leadership	Postcode to the Globe mentoring
Beverlie Weston	Project Co-ordinator, Emerge Leadership	Postcode to the Globe mentoring
Matthew Green	Principal Consultant, Publicus Ltd.	Programme Data Management Advisor

Table 3. Overview of the evaluation team

Delivery team		
Name	Title and institution	Role
Miranda Phillips	Research Director, NatCen	Principal investigator, overall study lead, senior oversight
Eliza Garwood	Senior Researcher, NatCen	Day-to-day project manager, qualitative lead
Hannah Woodbridge	Senior Researcher, NatCen	Data collection, analysis and reporting
Nicky McGuinness	Senior Researcher, NatCen	Reporting, day-to-day project management
Natasha Phillips	Researcher, NatCen	Data collection, analysis and reporting
Julia Ruddick-Trentmann	Researcher, NatCen	Data collection, analysis and reporting
Isaac Thornton	Senior Researcher, NatCen	Quantitative data analysis
Kostas Papaioannou	Senior Researcher, NatCen	Quantitative data analysis

Methods

The pilot evaluation ran from September 2021 to July 2022, taking an IPE methods approach. This involved a mixed-methods approach, including the analysis of a pre- and post-online questionnaire with pupils, pupil administrative data and qualitative data from school staff, mentors and pupils.

Participant selection

School selection

The pilot evaluation included 12 schools. This comprised 10 schools that agreed to participate in the study, plus two 'backup' schools. The 10 original schools were put forward by Titan and were all experienced in delivering the CRC programme, having delivered the CRC programme at their schools during the academic year 2019/20 and 2020/21. Titan selected schools that a) delivered all planned sessions to learners in 2019/20 and 2020/21 prior to any COVID-19 school closures and b) had the capacity to carry out the evaluation.

Titan also selected two further backup schools that were similar to the evaluation schools in terms of the processes they followed (including the evaluation opt-out procedure) and their delivery of the CRC programme. Backup schools were not part of the original design but were included in order to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on the evaluation (the backup schools could be included if any schools had to drop out). In fact, while all the original schools remained in the evaluation, we decided to include all 12 schools in our quantitative analysis, given that this resulted in a larger sample, boosted statistical power, gave more potential for subgroup analysis and made use of the data that had been collected. In our view, there were no drawbacks to increasing the quantitative sample in this way.

Participant selection for the quantitative component

All Year Five and Year Six pupils in the 12 pilot evaluation schools were invited to complete a pre- and post-online questionnaire, which allowed us to measure pupils' 'distance travelled' over the course of the intervention (both universal and targeted elements). However, without a comparison group, this will likely be an overestimate of efficacy, as we cannot rule out non-intervention changes. We assumed that around 20% of pupils might not complete a pre- or post-survey due to parental withdrawal, non-attendance or missing responses. Given the estimated size of the schools in the evaluation and an assumed attrition rate of 20%, we expected to have around 950 completed surveys across Year Five and Year Six pupils.

In fact, as we increased the number of schools from 10 to 12, and as some schools were larger than had been assumed, our estimates on the number of eligible pupils were too low. Meanwhile, attrition was greater than anticipated (for a fuller discussion, see Table 8 and the accompanying text later in this chapter). The two roughly cancelled each other out, resulting in a final sample of 997 cases.

The final sample size is sufficiently large to allow a precise estimate of (a) pre-post correlations, which will inform power analyses for any later controlled trial, (b) estimates of covariates such as gender, which are associated with outcomes and should be controlled for in a full trial and (c) psychometric properties such as McDonald's ω, enabling us to be confident in measure reliability and validity.

Participant selection for the qualitative component

CRC champions

The CRC champion is the project lead at the school, usually a member of the senior leadership team or a Year Five or Year Six phase leader or teacher. Titan notified participating schools and CRC champions about the evaluation. Titan provided NatCen with a list of CRC champions at participating schools who gave permission to be contacted about the research. NatCen emailed CRC champions, inviting them to participate in an interview. CRC champions interested in taking part contacted NatCen. A telephone or online interview (via Microsoft Teams) was arranged at a time convenient to the CRC champion during their usual working hours.

Teachers

Teachers were recruited via the CRC champion. When arranging the CRC champion interviews, the researcher asked if they could also facilitate the recruitment of teachers who had delivered Choices. Interested teachers contacted NatCen directly to take part. A telephone or online (via Microsoft Teams) interview was arranged at a time convenient to the teacher during their usual working hours.

Mentors

Emerge Leadership facilitated the recruitment of mentors. Emerge emailed their mentors information about the study and interview. Interested mentors contacted NatCen directly to take part. A telephone interview or online interview (via Microsoft Teams) was arranged at a time convenient to the mentor. Interviews were conducted in pairs and individually. Paired interviews enabled mentors to be interviewed with their colleagues; however, participant availability meant this was not always feasible.

Pupils

Pupils were recruited via the CRC champions. On first contact, CRC champions were asked to arrange a site visit (discussed below) that included a group discussion with pupils. This discussion focused on either Choices or group mentoring. Pupils were preselected by the CRC champion ahead of the visit. CRC champions also selected pupils to take part in online interviews (via Microsoft Teams) about one-on-one mentoring. Schools provided parents with information sheets (Appendix A in the Technical Appendix) that explained that participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw their child by returning an opt-out slip to the school.

Data collection

Quantitative data collection

Pre- and post-online questionnaires with pupils

A number of outcome measures were discussed with YEF and Titan at the feasibility stage. Various scales were considered, taking into account considerations such as YEF preferences for consistent measures across its projects, Titan's existing use of the SCWBS, the feasibility of administration in schools (bearing in mind teacher burden) and the age-suitability of measures for children in Years Five and Six. The final outcome measures were agreed upon by YEF and Titan and consisted of three different scales:

- Stirling Children's Wellbeing Scale (SCWBS) (Liddle and Carter, 2015) is a holistic measure of emotional and psychological well-being intended for use with children aged eight to 15 years. It was designed in a process initiated by the Stirling Educational Psychology Service. This questionnaire includes 12 positively worded items measuring children's well-being[12].
- Me and My Feelings (MAMF) (sometimes referred to as Me and My School; Deighton et al., 2013) is a school-based measure of child mental health. This 16-item questionnaire includes two subscales covering emotional and behavioural difficulties.
- Student Resilience Survey (SRS) (Lereya et al., 2016; Sun et al., 2007) aims to measure students' perceptions of their individual characteristics as well as protective factors embedded in the environment that support their resilience. This study chose six subscales rather than using the full measure. The six were: peer relationship, communication, self-esteem, empathy, problem-solving and goals and aspirations.

The individual statements for each scale are shown in Section 1.2.4 in Appendix B in the Technical Appendix (see Tables A7-A12). Table 4 shows how the survey scales (and subscales) map onto the logic model outcomes[13]. In the table, we have assigned outcomes to four broad dimensions to help summarise the relationships between outcomes and outcome measures (they are not included in the logic model).

Table 4. Project outcomes mapped against data collection tools

Logic model outcomes	Survey scales	Qualitative topic guides
Relationships and communication		
Relationships with adults, teachers and peers Ability to understand others: - listening skills - communication - empathy - challenging ideas Ability to talk about difficult subjects Ability to show kindness and care to others LT: positive mental attitude to others	SRS subscale: - peer relationship - communication - empathy SCWBS	Teachers/CRC champions/mentors Explore general outcomes for pupils: - relationships, including friendships - communication Pupils Any changes to the way you behave: - in school (relationships with teacher/other pupils) - out of school (relationships with siblings or other family members)
Behaviour		
Ability to manage and avoid harmful behaviours Ability to assess and manage risk Behaviour in school: - attendance - attitude to learning - engagement in school life LT: resilience - self-regulation	MAMF behavioural difficulties	Teachers/CRC champions/mentors Explore general outcomes for pupils: - behaviour - attitude Pupils Any changes to the way you behave: - in school (lesson time/playground) - out of school (at home) Any changes to the way you make decisions (in/out of school)

[12] An additional three items measure social desirability, i.e. children's tendency to present themselves in a generally positive light (e.g. 'I have always told the truth'). According to guidance by Liddle and Carter (2015), an overall score of 14 or 15 out of 15 would indicate that a child's well-being scores should be treated with caution.

[13] The measures map onto project *outcomes* rather than the overall project aim or *impact*. The impact would be expected to materialise over a longer time frame than the evaluation and is therefore out of scope. An alternative approach, such as monitoring CJS data for levels of offending, could be considered by YEF at a later stage.

Goal setting and better decision-making		
Aspirational goal setting Ability to self-reflect Confidence to make better decisions LT: use of a value system for decision-making LT: resilience - self-efficacy	SRS subscale: - goals and aspirations - problem-solving SCWBS	<u>Teachers/CRC champions/mentors</u> Explore general outcomes for pupils: - decision-making - attitude <u>Pupils</u> Any changes to the way you make decisions (in/out of school)
Resilience/mental attitude/well-being		
LT: application of growth mindset LT: resilience: - self-esteem - self-worth LT: positive mental attitude to: - environment - learning ST: how they see themselves (their identity and how this is constructed)	SRS overall SRS subscale: - self-esteem SCWBS MAMF emotional difficulties	<u>Teachers/CRC champions/mentors</u> Explore general outcomes for pupils: - attitude - resilience (coping when things go wrong) <u>Pupils</u> Any changes to the way you behave (in/out of school) Any changes to the way you make decisions (in/out of school) Any changes to the way you think about yourself

Outcomes are medium term and longer term (those indicated as 'LT'). Short-term outcomes are not included where they directly link with medium-/long-term outcomes; the one exception is indicated as 'ST'.
Qualitative topic guides included areas for discussion and prompts that were used as needed.

The three scales were included in an online questionnaire, which also collected respondent details, including name, gender and ethnicity. Pupils completed the same survey at the beginning (September-October 2021) and end of the programme (June-July 2022). The survey was programmed by Lime and administered to whole classes by CRC champions or another member of staff at each of the evaluation schools.

At the end of the academic year (July-August 2022), Lime[14] combined the data from the baseline and endline surveys and merged this with additional administrative data from schools (see below). Lime shared the combined dataset of administrative and survey data with NatCen (using a secure folder).

Collection of administrative data

In the protocol, the plan was for Lime to collect the following administrative data from schools: school name, unique pupil number, pupil name, gender, ethnicity, date of birth, year group, city and pupil attendance at Choices and mentoring sessions. In fact, name, gender, ethnicity and date of birth were collected in the pupil survey to reduce the burden on schools. Given this, we agreed with Lime that the dataset transferred to NatCen should include respondent personal data (rather than being pseudonymised, as originally assumed in the protocol). The survey and administrative data were shared with NatCen in a single dataset by Lime using a secure server at the end of delivery in August 2022.

Qualitative data collection

The study took an IPE approach, with qualitative methods used to complement the quantitative data, adding depth, detail and explanation. This enabled the evaluation to address a number of different research questions, such as those that cannot be answered by quantitative data alone. Several different data collection tools were used, including observations, interviews and focus groups with a range of participants

[14] Lime was responsible for the quantitative data management; it used a subcontractor (Publicus) to deliver this.

across different settings. We then used thematic analysis and the Framework approach to interpret patterns and clusters of meaning within the data.

Observation of training sessions

We observed two training sessions to gather information on the coverage and delivery of the CRC programme and practitioners' engagement with the programme. This included Choices training (universal) that was completed in January 2022 and Postcode to the Globe mentoring training (targeted) in February 2022. Both training sessions were online (via Zoom); therefore, we carried out observations remotely. We carried out observations using an observation pro forma. The pro forma was divided into different themes (attendance, engagement and adaptation) to capture key implementation dimensions.

Research with school staff and mentors

Interviews with CRC champions, teachers and mentors took place between March-April and June-July 2022. Interviews were led by a NatCen researcher over the phone or online (via Microsoft Teams). Interviews lasted around 45 minutes.

Topic guides (Section 1.2 in Appendix A in the Technical Appendix) were developed to ensure consistent topic coverage across participants. The interviews explored:

- participants' understanding of the CRC Project;
- their experience of training and ongoing support to deliver the intervention;
- their experience of implementing the intervention, including what worked well and any challenges they encountered;
- perceived outcomes of the intervention for pupils, schools, teachers and mentors; and
- suggestions to refine the intervention or its delivery.

When developing topic guides, we also considered questions that remained or were identified after the feasibility study. For example, this included adding specific prompts around gender, the selection of pupils and the outcomes for schools. Table 4 (earlier in the chapter) shows how the topic guide content about perceived outcomes maps onto the logic model outcomes.

We originally aimed to interview 10 CRC champions; however, our achieved sample was slightly lower. School staff were incredibly busy at the time of the pilot, with disruptions to staffing and teaching caused by COVID-19. Additionally, some CRC champions were also teaching Choices content; therefore, their interviews covered questions aimed at both CRC champions and teachers. These participants are only counted once in the sample – as teachers. Table 8 shows the total number of participants in the study.

Research with pupils

To gain an in-depth understanding of how the intervention was being experienced and delivered in practice, we completed a site visit at seven of the evaluation schools. Evaluation activities at each site visit covered *either* the universal or mentoring component. The two site visit waves were as follows:

- **Wave 1** (March 2022) – universal component (Year Five) and targeted component (Year Six) across four schools
- **Wave 2** (June-July 2022) – universal component (Year Six) and targeted component (Year Five) across three schools

Site visits included focus group discussions with four to six pupils to understand their experiences of either Choices or mentoring, perceived outcomes and suggestions for improvement.

Visits also involved observations of a Choices lesson or a group mentoring session to understand the content of these sessions, pupils' engagement and any barriers and facilitators to delivery. We used a pro forma to capture key implementation dimensions. We aimed to conduct four observations per component type; however, this was not possible due to parental opt-outs. We achieved one observation of a Choices lesson and two observations of mentoring sessions.

Additionally, we carried out individual interviews with pupils involved in the one-on-one mentoring to explore their experiences of mentoring and perceived outcomes. Interviews lasted around 45 minutes. These interviews were originally intended to take place during the site visit. However, one-on-one mentoring started after group mentoring sessions had been completed, meaning this was not possible, as one-on-one mentoring had not yet begun at the time of our visit. These interviews were moved online (via Microsoft Teams) and carried out remotely, with a teacher facilitating the set-up of the interview. Topic guides for all pupil interviews and focus groups are detailed in Section 1.2 in Appendix A in the Technical Appendix.

We had originally intended to visit eight of the evaluation schools rather than seven; however, this was not possible due to conflicting priorities for the school (SATs, residential trips and so on), staff absence and COVID-19 disruptions.

Research with parents

Our intention was to carry out 10 interviews with parents/carers of pupils taking part in the mentoring programme. However, these did not take place due to challenges in recruiting parents/carers to the study, the relatively small pool of parents with children involved in the targeted component per school and difficulties recruiting parents through the school rather than directly.

Input from the CRC Project team

The protocol for this pilot evaluation did not include interviews with the developers of the CRC Project. However, the team were consulted during the reporting process, allowing their clarifications about the intervention and its delivery to be added to the report retrospectively (these additions are noted as such).

Methods overview

Table 5 gives an overview of the different data collection methods. For each, it summarises the participants or data sources involved, the analysis methods used and which research question each method addressed.

Table 5. Methods overview

Research methods	Data collection methods	Participants/data sources	Data analysis method	Research questions addressed
Quantitative	Administrative data, including attendance at Choices and mentoring sessions	Supplied/collected by schools for Year Five and Year Six pupils at 12 primary schools	Descriptive analysis	What is the intervention reach and dosage?
Quantitative	Survey (pre and post)	Year Five and Year Six pupils (c.1,000) at 12 primary schools	Descriptive analysis Estimate of pre-post standardised mean difference Two-tailed t-tests Regression analysis of moderators of change	• What is the change in children's social and emotional outcomes and resilience? • *Survey scores also used to test success criteria.*
Qualitative	Observation • training • Choices lessons • group mentoring	• school staff (Choices) and mentors • Year Five and Year Six pupils (universal and targeted component)	Thematic analysis	• How is the CRC Project implemented in practice, and what adaptations are made to delivery? • What are the challenges and enablers to delivering the intervention as intended? • What is the intervention reach and dosage? • Is the intervention acceptable to teachers and children? How engaged are teachers, mentors and children in the intervention? • Are there any adverse or unintended consequences?
Qualitative	Interviews and paired interviews	• teachers • CRC champions • Year Five and Year Six one-on-one mentoring pupils • mentors	Framework approach Thematic analysis	• How and why schools are recruited to the intervention? • How is the CRC Project implemented in practice, and what adaptations are made to delivery? • What are the challenges and enablers to delivering the intervention as intended? • What is the intervention reach and dosage? • Is the intervention acceptable to teachers, mentors and children? How engaged are teachers, mentors and children in the intervention? • What changes, if any, are made to teacher and mentor practice and school support for children at risk of becoming vulnerable to criminal exploitation as a result of the programme? • What is the change in children's social and emotional outcomes and resilience? • Are there any adverse or unintended consequences? • What changes are required to optimise delivery?
Qualitative	Focus group discussion	• Year Five and Year Six pupils – universal component • Year Five and Year Six pupils – targeted component	Framework approach Thematic analysis	• How and why schools are recruited to the intervention? • How is the CRC Project implemented in practice, and what adaptations are made to delivery? • What are the challenges and enablers to delivering the intervention as intended? • What is the intervention reach and dosage? • Is the intervention acceptable to teachers, mentors and children? How engaged are teachers, mentors and children in the intervention? • What changes, if any, are made to teacher and mentor practice and school support for children at risk of becoming vulnerable to criminal exploitation as a result of the programme? • What is the change in children's social and emotional outcomes and resilience? • Are there any adverse or unintended consequences? What changes are required to optimise delivery?

Quantitative data preparation and analysis

Data preparation

Lime was responsible for linking the pupil survey data (baseline and endline) and the administrative data. Individual pseudonymised identifiers were not created during data collection[15], so data were matched using Google's OpenRefine probabilistic data linkage software, using variables including name and date of birth. The combined pupil survey data was linked to administrative data variables (including programme attendance data) using a combination of variables (including pupil name). A number of cases were dropped at this stage due to failure to match data at the individual level (see Table 8 later in this chapter).

NatCen received a dataset with 1,035 observations. This included data from 10 previously identified evaluation schools, plus an additional two backup schools that also participated in the trial and provided opt-out consent for participation. As part of our data preparation, we performed initial checks on the data and deleted 38 observations for a number of reasons, including missing opt-out information, missing UPNs and duplicate cases.

After data cleaning, the final sample size was 997 pupils. As a further check, we investigated differences in responses asking about demographic and personal characteristics at baseline and endline. We observed that a number of cases had non-matching data at the two time points for gender, ethnicity, name or date of birth (further details are in Section 1.1 of Appendix B in the Technical Appendix). A manual check of the data indicated that:

- name differences were due to different spellings or addition/omission of middle/last names;
- differences in gender showed no clear pattern;
- differences in ethnicity also showed no clear pattern, although results suggest that many pupils used the open text box to describe their ethnicity in one or both surveys and did so slightly differently in each wave; and
- birth date differences showed no clear pattern (we suspect they are keying errors).

Overall, our view was that most of these mismatches are likely to be due to pupil error when completing the surveys. None of the discrepancies were considered serious enough to merit the deletion of observations from the dataset, so we retained all 997 observations for analysis. When deriving gender and ethnicity-related covariates, we reported pupils with different results at baseline and endline as a separate category.

We performed all data cleaning and analysis in Stata 17 SE-64. The syntax is available on request for the purposes of transparency and reproducibility.

Creating scores for outcome measures

We derived scores for the three main survey-collected outcome measures and some of their subscales.

[15] While unique identifiers were included in the protocol, the developers decided not to pursue this for the pilot survey due to concerns that their use would be problematic for survey completion rates and matching purposes, that it would be burdensome for teachers and that there would be errors by pupils inputting the identifiers.

For the **SCWBS**, we derived a single continuous score by calculating the sum total of scores for the main 12 items, with responses ranging from 12 'low well-being' to 60 'high well-being'. The developers of the scale do not provide guidance on scoring responses categorically.

The **MAMF** overall scale consists of two separate subscales:

- emotional difficulties (scored 0-20: 0-9 'expected level of difficulty', 10-11 'borderline difficulty' and 12-20 'elevated difficulty')
- behavioural difficulties (scored 0-12: 0-5 'expected level of difficulty', 6 'borderline difficulty' and 7-12 'elevated difficulty')

All items in this measure are positively worded except for the item 'I am calm', which was reverse coded before outcome derivation. For the purposes of pre-post analysis, we analysed the overall scores and the two subscales separately for three continuous outcome measures.

The version of the **SRS** we used contains 15 items that assess different elements of resilience. Higher scores indicate more positive outcomes. We produced a single overall score by taking the sum total of survey items (from 15-75) and deriving six separate subscales. Subscales include:

- peer relationship (two items, scored 2-10),
- communication (three items, scored 3-15),
- self-esteem (three items, scored 3-15),
- empathy (two items, scored 2-10),
- problem-solving (three items, scored 3-15) and
- goals and aspirations (two items, scored 2-10)

To simplify analysis and reduce inflating the risk of type-1 error through repeated significance testing, we focused on the overall scores for the main pre-post analysis but reported scores for individual items and SRS subscales in Appendix B in the Technical Appendix.

Mean imputation of missing outcome data

We had planned to conduct mean imputation in cases of large amounts of missing data for each survey independently (outlined in the protocol). However, the pupil surveys were set up in such a way that all survey questions were mandatory (and could not be skipped). This resulted in all questions being completed, meaning there was no missing data for individual items. Consequently, no mean imputation was necessary.

Analysis

We used quantitative analysis to help address three of the research questions:

- **Evidence of feasibility:** What is the intervention reach and dosage?
- **Evidence of promise:** What is the change in children's social and emotional outcomes and resilience?
- **Readiness for trial:** Have suitable outcome measures been identified for evaluation?

The analysis also assessed some of the study's success criteria (detailed in Readiness for trial).

We conducted descriptive, pre-post, subgroup, regression and psychometric analyses, as outlined within this section. As per the protocol, we report sample base sizes for each analysis and do not report cell sizes under 10 to minimise the risk of reporting identifiable respondent information (ONS, 2022). The analysis is described in this section, with results reported in the relevant chapters of the report.

Descriptive analysis

We describe the sample (n = 997), including a breakdown of pupil characteristics. We report the reach of the programme in terms of the number of pupils and schools in the evaluation.

We also describe session attendance. For the universal Choices sessions, we calculated the number of sessions each pupil attended and derived the mean, minimum and maximum. Separately for the one-on-one and group mentoring components, respectively, we calculated the number of sessions pupils attended, both in total and as a percentage of possible sessions, and again derived the mean, minimum and maximum. The number of possible sessions varied by school, so we used these figures for the calculations rather than the intended number of sessions.

For further descriptive analysis of outcome data, we report the intercorrelations for each of the outcome measures separately at baseline and endline. This enables the exploration of, for example, whether selected outcome measures correlate with each other in the expected direction in line with the success criteria (e.g. resilience is negatively correlated with emotional and behavioural difficulties).

Pre-post analysis

We conducted a pre-post analysis to assess against the success criteria that the pre-post survey data show a mean improvement in outcomes (e.g. improved well-being), with the strong caveat that, since there is no comparison group, this will likely overestimate efficacy. For example, some change will likely be due to regression to the mean, whereby pupils with more extreme outcomes at baseline (e.g. especially low well-being) would likely show movement towards mean levels (e.g. an increase in well-being) over the course of the trial, regardless of its impact.

We conducted two-tailed t-tests to assess whether the mean change between pre-intervention (time 1) and post-intervention (time 2) was statistically significant for each survey measure.

We reported pre- and post-intervention means and standard deviations for each outcome, the number of matched observations, the raw mean pre-post difference, the pre-post standardised mean difference[16] and the p-value for the two-tailed t-test. Graphically, we summarised the standardised mean differences for each outcome.

Subgroup analysis

To identify group-based heterogeneities in the changes in outcomes over the programme, we conducted subgroup analyses. We compared the following subgroups:

- Programme component: pupils who received the universal component only vs pupils who also received the targeted component
- Year group: Year Six pupils vs Year Five pupils
- Gender: pupils who chose the survey response 'I'm a girl' vs other pupils
- Attendance: pupils who attended all 11 Choices sessions vs pupils who attended 10 or fewer

[16] For pre-post comparisons, this is calculated by dividing the mean pre-post difference by the standard deviation of baseline scores (see Becker, 1988, p. 260). The mathematical formula is $\frac{\text{Yendline} - \text{Ybaseline}}{\text{standard deviation at baseline}}$.

For each of these subgroup distinctions and each outcome, we computed the difference in baseline scores, endline scores and pre-post changes, reporting the mean difference, p-value and standardised mean differences[17]. Where significant differences were observed across outcomes, we conducted pre-post analysis in the subgroups themselves.

Regression analysis

In addition to pre-post comparisons, we performed regression analyses to further explore nuances in outcomes, conditional on the covariates. This adds value to the existing subgroup analysis, as it enables us to explore differences based on one subgroup distinction, controlling for other factors (e.g. to look at gender differences, controlling for ethnicity). It also goes beyond a single binary comparison to further explore cross-cutting variables with multiple categories (such as ethnicity). The covariates included were: 'the number of CRC sessions attended', 'whether a pupil received a targeted component', 'year group', 'gender' and 'ethnicity'[18]. We fitted separate regression models for each outcome.

The regression model took the following specification:

$$(1)\ Y_{endline\ score} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{baseline\ score} + \beta_2 Covariates + \varepsilon$$

where Y is the endline outcome score for each measure, β_0 is the intercept, $X_{baseline\ score}$ is the baseline score of the outcome and the vector $Covariates$ denotes a set of characteristics acting as covariates (e.g. school year, receiving a targeted component). The error term is represented by ε.

This regression analysis was also used to calculate subgroup differences based on ethnicity. We included a dummy for each self-reported ethnicity category in the regression model (using Pakistani, the largest group, as the reference category) and performed follow-up pairwise comparisons for each pair of ethnic groups using the *pwcompare* command in Stata. This command enabled us to see the pairwise comparisons (differences) across all ethnicity categories, along with significance tests or confidence intervals for those differences. We did not correct for multiple hypothesis testing due to the very large number of comparisons being run, and therefore these results should be interpreted with caution.

Psychometric analysis

One success criterion for the pilot is that the outcome measures are internally valid. For each of our outcome measures and subscales, we explored their psychometric properties, measuring internal validity by calculating Cronbach's α and McDonald's ω reliability measures. We calculated these statistics separately at baseline and endline.

To our knowledge, no other study has used the present six subscales of the SRS together, so one objective of the pilot and psychometric analysis was to verify their reliability and validity with an English sample. Furthermore, we explored the distributions of participants' scores for each outcome and subscale visually, using histograms. We did this separately for baseline and endline scores. This supplemented the descriptive

[17] For comparisons between two groups at one point in time, there are two similar options for calculating the standardised mean difference: Cohen's *d* and Hedges' *g*. These are very similar, although the latter uses a pooled standard deviation weighted by sample size so as to improve performance in small samples or when the two groups compared have different sample sizes. We used Hedges' *g,* as some subgroups studied could be relatively small or inequal in size.

[18] We included dummy variables for all gender and ethnicity categories.

analysis, where we explored levels of outcomes at baseline and endline, as well as the intercorrelations between all the different measures and subscales.

Qualitative data preparation and analysis

Interviews were audio recorded with participants' permission and transcribed verbatim. We used the Framework approach, a systematic approach to qualitative data management developed by NatCen to chart (collate and summarise) transcribed data by theme and case (Ritchie et al., 2013). Using the themes covered in topic guides and new emerging themes, we assembled a matrix in which each row represented an individual interview and each column a theme and any related sub-themes. We then summarised the interview data in the matrix, including illustrative verbatim quotes where appropriate.

Once all interviews were coded in the matrix, we analysed the data. This involved a phase of 'detection', which included studying the elements participants said about a given topic, listing these and then sorting them thematically. Once we had identified different themes in the data, we created higher-level categories that worked as meaningful conceptual groupings for participants' views and experiences. An observation template was developed to record researchers' notes of observed sessions (training sessions, Choices lessons and a mentoring session). These notes were revisited after analysis of the charted data to add additional details about implementation that were missing and highlight findings that were complementary or different to interview findings.

The analysis is fully documented, and conclusions can be linked back to original data sources.

Data synthesis

We have triangulated and synthesised pilot data according to our research questions. This has enabled us to provide a comprehensive assessment of implementation and to report findings against the finalised logic model. The following steps have been taken to ensure rigorous qualitative and quantitative analysis and reporting:

- We have presented examples of participant responses using quotes and triangulated responses from different participant groups to ensure that the reported findings are an accurate reflection of participants' views and experiences.
- We have considered the extent to which findings are transferable through a description of contextual factors and by drawing out similarities and differences between participants with different characteristics (e.g. year group, gender) to reflect a range of perspectives.
- We have highlighted and reflected upon contrasting and inconsistent accounts when interpreting findings.
- For quantitative data, we have documented data sources, reported on sample sizes and suppressed cells under 10.

Timeline

Table 6. Timeline

Date	Activity	Staff responsible/leading
June 2021	Recruitment documents shared with YEF	NatCen
Aug 2021	Finalise recruitment documents	NatCen
Aug 2021	Finalise pre- and post-survey	Lime, NatCen
Sep 2021	Sign and collect MoUs	Titan, schools
Sep-Oct 2021	Pre-intervention pupil survey	Lime, schools
Dec 2021-Feb 2022	Observation of training sessions	Lime, Emerge, NatCen
Feb 2022	Wave 1 – recruitment and opt-out process	NatCen, Titan, Lime, Emerge
March 2022	Wave 1 – site visits	NatCen
May 2022	Wave 2 – recruitment and opt-out process	NatCen, Titan, Lime, Emerge
Jun-Jul 2022	Wave 2 – site visits Interviews with CRC champions	NatCen
Jun-Jul 2022	Post-intervention pupil survey	Titan, Lime, schools
Aug-Sept 2022	Administrative and survey data shared with NatCen Data management and analysis	Titan, Lime, Emerge, NatCen
Oct-Dec 2022	Reporting	NatCen
March 2023	Data archiving	NatCen

Evidence of feasibility: programme context

There are three evidence of feasibility chapters. In this chapter, we start by describing the evaluation sample, both qualitative and quantitative. We then present qualitative findings on reasons for schools' and mentors' involvement with the CRC programme and participants' understanding of the programme aims. The two other evidence of feasibility chapters cover the universal and targeted components.

Participants

Qualitative sample

We conducted qualitative fieldwork across 10 schools, consisting of interviews, focus groups and observations. Initially, we only intended to conduct fieldwork in eight schools; however, this number was expanded to include the backup schools, as we were unable to schedule interviews with school staff at two schools. The four participant groups in the sample were CRC champions, teachers, mentors and Year Five and Year Six pupils.

In total, we conducted 18 online interviews across these groups as follows: CRC champions (six), teachers (five), mentors (four) and pupils who had accessed one-on-one mentoring (three).

We conducted seven in-person focus groups with pupils. Three focus groups discussed Choices (two Year Five groups, one Year Six), and four discussed group mentoring (two Year Five groups, two Year Six). Each focus group had between four and six participants.

We carried out five observations, as follows:

- an online training session for mentors, delivered by Emerge Leadership;
- an online Year Five CRC training for teachers and champions, delivered by Lime and Emerge Leadership;
- a Year Five group mentoring session, observed in person;
- a Year Six group mentoring session, observed in person and
- a Year Five Choices lesson, observed in person.

Our in-person fieldwork entailed site visits to seven schools. Each site visit focused on either Choices or mentoring and included a pupil focus group and, where none of the pupils in the group had been opted-out, an observation of either a Choices lesson or a group mentoring session.

Table 7 provides an overview of the achieved sample in terms of numbers of participants rather than numbers of fieldwork encounters (these are given above).

Table 7. Achieved qualitative sample

Achieved sample (number of participants)	
CRC champions	6
Teachers	5*
Mentors	4**
Pupils	35***
Total	50

This table summarises the total number of unique participants. Individuals who occupied multiple roles or were interviewed more than once have only been counted once.

* Three teachers were also CRC champions and were interviewed about both roles. These individuals have been counted as teachers and are not included in the champions total.

** One mentor interview was paired (meaning two mentors participated). One mentor from this paired interview was interviewed a second time; this participant has been counted once.

*** Focus groups varied in size between four to six participants; the total of 35 assumes an average of five pupils per group. Three one-on-one mentoring pupils who we interviewed remotely also participated in the pupil focus groups; they have been counted once.

Quantitative sample

Schools

The quantitative sample for the evaluation came from 12 schools. The schools were selected by Titan on the basis of having previous experience with the CRC Project and their ability to take part in the evaluation activities alongside programme delivery. This was in the context of schools being stretched while dealing with the effects of COVID-19 and a concern that the evaluation would be undermined if schools had to drop out. However, as we did not select schools based on other sampling criteria, the evaluation schools are unlikely to be representative of all schools delivering the CRC programme. Indeed, the evaluation schools are likely to overrepresent high-performing schools, given they were more likely to be experienced in programme delivery and capable of committing to the evaluation.

The 12 schools were varied in terms of size. Around two-thirds were small one- or two-form entry schools. Two schools were particularly large, with either four or five classes per year group.

Pupils

All Year Five and Year Six children in these 12 schools were eligible for the programme and the evaluation (estimated n = 1,653).[19]

In total, 656 eligible cases were dropped from the dataset at a number of different stages for different reasons, and details of this sample **attrition** are set out in Table 8. Reasons for attrition are not mutually exclusive, and the table avoids double counting by assigning cases to a single category. In other words, while some pupils have more than one reason to be dropped from the final dataset (such as missing the baseline and the endline survey), we have only included them once (i.e. for one reason) in the table.[20]

[19] This figure was provided by Lime and is their estimate based on their assumption that each class = 29 pupils.

[20] The data provided from Lime does not clearly show all the overlaps, so our calculations are our best estimates based on the information we have.

First, 151 pupils (9% of the total possible sample n = 1,653) did not complete the baseline survey, while 341 (21% of the total) did not complete the endline. The figure for this category in the table is lower (n = 190) due to this category overlapping with other categories (as explained above, we assign each case to a single category in the table). Information from the developers suggests these missing cases at baseline and endline were primarily due to large-scale absences from school due to COVID-19.

Further to that, cases were removed due to failure to match data at the individual level. This matching was carried out by Lime and resulted in around 12% of cases (n = 197) being removed from the dataset. The final stage carried out by Lime was removing parental opt-outs; our calculations suggest this amounted to 80 cases or 5% of the total sample. In fact, opt-outs for the pilot study as a whole will have been higher, as the data we have on opt-outs only relates to cases in the dataset at the final stage of data checking (i.e. after a large number of cases had already been removed). If a similar level of opt-outs was found for all pupils, our figures suggest 7% of the total sample would have been opted out.

Once NatCen received the dataset, we carried out checks on the data and removed a small number of cases (n = 38) due to duplicate or missing information. This resulted in a final sample of 997 pupils (details are given in the Methods chapter).

This gives a total attrition rate of 40%, higher than the 20% we estimated in the protocol. We note that the 20% figure assumed that most attrition would happen between baseline and endline surveys, whereas in reality, there were also substantial levels of attrition at baseline and at data matching stages.

Table 8. Sample attrition

Overview of sample and reasons for attrition	No. of pupils	% of eligible pupils
Total eligible	**1,653**	**100%**
Total attrition	**656**	**40%**
of which: *did not complete the baseline survey*	*151*	*9%*
did not complete the endline survey	*190*	*11%*
Cases dropped due to failure to match data across waves	*197*	*12%*
Parental opt-out	*80*	*5%*
Cases removed due to missing data or duplication	*38*	*2%*
Total in the final evaluation sample	**997**	**60%**

Note: The table gives a breakdown of reasons for attrition, with figures for individual categories summing to the total (656). In fact, these categories are not mutually exclusive, and there is considerable overlap; however, the data we have does not show these overlaps clearly, so the figures are our best estimates.

Table 9 displays pupil characteristics by year group, gender and ethnicity. We caveat the findings on socio-demographic details by noting that many pupils reported different ethnic backgrounds and, to a lesser extent, genders at baseline and endline.

The sample was balanced in terms of year group and gender[21], with a minority of pupils describing their gender in 'some other way', differently between survey waves or who preferred not to say.

The sample was ethnically[22] quite diverse. Constituting almost a third of the sample, the largest ethnic group was Pakistani (29%), followed by White (13%), Bangladeshi (10%) and Black/African/Caribbean (6%). Almost a third of pupils either gave different responses in the baseline and endline surveys (26%) or chose the 'other' ethnicity category and used the open text option to record a different ethnicity/national origin (5%).

Table 9. Quantitative pupil sample characteristics

Characteristic	No. of pupils	% pupils
Year group		
Year Five	504	51
Year Six	493	49
Gender		
Boy	466	47
Girl	490	49
Differs between baseline and endline	39	4
Ethnicity		
Arab	28	3
Bangladeshi	96	10
Indian	28	3
Pakistani	291	29
Black/African/Caribbean	63	6
White	132	13
Mixed/multiple	49	5
Other	48	5
Differs between baseline and endline	256	26

Note: Base = 997
Cells with fewer than 10 cases have been suppressed (Gender: 'Other' and 'Prefer not to say'; Ethnicity: 'Prefer not to say').

How the CRC Project is understood

RQ: How and why schools are recruited to the intervention?

This section outlines schools' and mentors' reasons for involvement in the CRC Project and each group's understanding of the aims of the two elements of the programme: Choices and mentoring.

Reasons for participating

Schools

[21] Gender was derived using both baseline and endline survey data. Categories: Gender: I'm a boy, I'm a girl, Other, Prefer not to say, Differs between baseline and endline

[22] Ethnicity was derived using both baseline and endline survey data. Categories: Ethnicity: Arab, Bangladeshi, Indian, Pakistani, Black/African/Caribbean, White, Mixed/multiple, Other, Prefer not to say, Differs between baseline and endline

Evaluation schools were either existing Titan Partnership members or were introduced to the project at meetings where a Titan representative delivered a presentation about the CRC Project. Reasons schools decided to participate in the programme fell under two themes:

- **A good 'fit' with the wider school strategy:** Schools regarded the aims of CRC as complementary to the aims of the school and/or ethos they were trying to establish. For example, school staff cited existing school programmes that they believed the CRC Project would complement:

  '[The school's] ethos is encouraging independence, resilience and inquisitiveness, so obviously the resilience part of it is very much tied in with what we were doing in school'. **Teacher**

- **To address pupils' needs and vulnerabilities:** School staff outlined the following characteristics of pupils and their local environment that the CRC Project would help to address the following:
  - The school is in an area of high deprivation or high gang activity.
  - Pupils had low self-esteem and low confidence.
  - Pupils were vulnerable to peer pressure.
  - Pupils had concerns about upcoming challenges at school, i.e. SATs and the transition to secondary school.

    'It's a huge jump going from a small school to a large secondary school, and we just felt the project … would be useful for our children to become aware of the issues and understand the consequences of what their actions could be'. **CRC champion**

Mentors

Mentors were recruited through a variety of channels, such as adverts on social media and word of mouth. Over the life of the project, 42 mentors were recruited. Mentors were allocated to schools based on skills, experience and distance to school. All necessary materials were provided, including a handbook outlining each of the sessions and a resource box containing basic necessities such as pens, paper and markers.

The number of hours given to the project varied from mentor to mentor depending on how many schools they were working in. For example, if a mentor was working in one school, they would have an hour for preparation, an hour for delivery and an hour for review and reflection each week. The ratio was one mentor to a maximum of five students.

Mentors reported that they had heard about the CRC Project through friends' and colleagues' recommendations, some of whom worked as CRC mentors. There were two main motivations for their involvement in the programme:

- **Previous experiences of mentoring:** One motivator was the mentors' own positive experiences of receiving mentoring as a young person and consequently wanting to '*give back'* and be a positive influence for children from similar backgrounds.

- **A desire to help others:** Another reason for involvement was a motivation to be a positive role model and to instil self-confidence in pupils. One mentor described experiences of helping others in a voluntary capacity, so they saw the opportunity as a good fit for their skills and interests.

Aims of CRC

School staff had a good understanding of the aims of the universal component, and mentors had a good understanding of the key elements of the targeted component. However, participants' appreciation of the project as a whole and how the components interacted was more limited.

Understanding of Choices

Participants described two key aims of Choices:

- **Fostering confidence, resilience and other 'life skills'** to help pupils deal with challenging situations that they might face. This was especially important for pupils who were easily led by their classmates. School staff mostly referred to challenges that pupils may have in school rather than in the context of the risk of involvement in crime:

  'In school, we deal with the academic side, but you also have got to think of the other side of things as well. It's just more their well-being'. **CRC champion**

- **Making the right choices and understanding consequences:** Choices was seen to help pupils develop the ability to assess situations and make the right choices. Pupils described Choices as learning about choosing the right friends and not associating themselves with people who make poor decisions:

  'It is mostly about the choices [character in the story] makes and is it good, is it bad? The people … around him, are they good? Who are they motivated by? What are they like?' **Pupil**

Mentors had a moderate understanding of Choices lesson content and format. They were familiar with aspects of the comic and frequently used the Choices stories as a reference point during the sessions.

Understanding of the targeted component

Mentors described the key elements and objectives of mentoring sessions as follows:

- **Developing life skills:** Mentors saw the targeted component as a way to develop resilience, confidence and self-esteem.
- **Relating Choices content to real-life experiences:** The sessions provided a space for pupils to share their life experiences and relate them to the experiences of the characters in the Choices stories. Mentors aimed to make the sessions relatable and relevant to the pupils after getting to know them and understanding their individual needs.
- **Providing a safe space for pupils to be themselves:** The sessions gave pupils the opportunity to express themselves and have a voice outside of the classroom setting.

Mentors did not make a distinction between the aims of group mentoring and one-on-one mentoring. This aligns with the intention of the programme[23].

Despite having an interest in the mentoring sessions, school staff had limited insight into the targeted component. Their knowledge of the mentoring sessions was limited to feedback from mentoring pupils and chance encounters with mentors. School staff recognised that the targeted component was outside their remit as teachers, and they did not want to '*interfere*' with the sessions. However, they did want to know

[23] The CRC Project team clarified this in their response to the report.

more about the sessions and had an appetite for a more formalised feedback process. This is likely due to teachers' concern for pupils' progress and wanting to know how to best support them at school:

'An improvement on that side would be if the teachers could get either some sort of feedback from the mentors or if we could meet the mentors once every term just to see how they're getting on'. **Teacher**

Relating participants' views on programme aims to the logic model

NatCen worked with the CRC Project team to develop the logic model (see Figures 1 and 2), which includes short-, medium- and long-term outcomes for pupils, mentors and school staff. Participants primarily discussed short- and medium-term outcomes of the Choices and mentoring sessions rather than the overall impact or aim of the CRC Project. Although goal setting was a key pupil outcome in the logic model, school staff did not mention this when discussing the content of Choices sessions or outcomes for pupils. This seemed to be a less salient aspect of the programme for school staff, possibly because this was not directly reflected in the Choices comic. Similarly, mentors did not refer to goal setting when describing the aims of mentoring sessions, though it was mentioned as a possible activity. Additionally, respondents did not explicitly refer to the overall impact of reducing children's vulnerability to exploitation/criminality when discussing the aims of the CRC Project. However, this may be because the programme aims to be preventative (and the ultimate project impact is expected to materialise over a longer time frame). Finally, implementers only referred to the aims of the programme for pupils; they did not include aims for teachers, mentors or the school, perhaps seeing these as secondary objectives.

The targeted component does not have separate aims or outcomes listed in the logic model. In CRC Project programme theory, both elements of the project are designed to lead to the same set of outcomes. As evaluators, we were less clear about what the key aims or elements of mentoring sessions should be when compared with Choices. This, in part, reflects the adaptive nature of mentoring, with content tailored to the pupils' needs. However, it does limit our capacity to assess the extent to which mentoring delivery was in line with the project aims.

Evidence of feasibility: Choices (universal component)

This chapter covers the universal component of the programme. Choices comprises teacher-led lessons for pupils in Years Five and Six, focusing on a series of interactive digital stories called Stolen Lives. This chapter outlines reach and dosage, how the sessions have been delivered, challenges and enablers to delivery, how acceptable the programme is to pupils and staff and pupils' and teachers' engagement with the sessions.

Reach and dosage

RQ: What is the intervention reach and dosage?

Delivery of the universal component was largely consistent. Table 10 provides an overview of Choices' reach and dosage across schools.

Table 10. Overview of Choices delivery 2021/22

Choices delivery in 2021/22 across evaluation schools
Recipients All Year Five and Year Six pupils took part. This was consistent across all evaluation schools. This amounted to 997 pupils in the evaluation sample (after cases were removed due to opting out, attrition and data cleaning).
Frequency Typically delivered once a week, usually during Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education lesson time. Weekly lesson delivery was occasionally interrupted across schools, e.g. due to SATs or teacher absence, resulting in two lessons being delivered the following week.
Duration Varied between 40 and 90 minutes across schools. Lessons were intended to last 60 minutes, but teachers reported that this was often insufficient for covering the content of the lesson. One school reported splitting lessons into two 30-minute sessions to sustain pupil engagement (see Adaptations).
Number of lessons All teachers interviewed reported that the entire programme of lessons in Year Five (11 lessons) and Year Six (11 lessons) had been delivered. Quantitative attendance data showed that, on average, pupils (n = 997) attended 95% of Choices sessions (equating to about 10 sessions, with a range of four to 11 sessions). Two-thirds of pupils (67%) attended all sessions.
Communication with parents Schools either distributed letters provided by Titan Partnership to inform parents about Choices or included information about the programme in a newsletter or on the school website.

Programme implementation

RQ: How is the CRC Project implemented in practice, and what adaptations are made to delivery?

This section describes how the universal component of the CRC Project was implemented, including training and ongoing support received from the CRC Project team, and how the sessions were delivered in practice.

Training and support

Whilst training was offered to all schools, staff did not all attend if they had received training the previous year and did not feel it was needed.

Teachers from all evaluation schools attended one-hour workshops at the beginning of the programme, as intended. Most evaluation schools received in-person training at the start of the programme; however, others attended online training instead during COVID-19 restrictions. Initial training for teachers involved:

- background on the aims and objectives of the programme;

- video demonstrations of teachers delivering the programme[24];
- video demonstrations of resources, i.e. Choices Lab, teacher's app and iPad;
- discussions about how to facilitate sessions and how to approach difficult subjects and
- information about the targeted component and how pupils would be selected for group and one-on-one mentoring.

Teachers had access to an online platform called the Choices Lab, where they could access resources from the training, such as videos and guidance on certain aspects of the programme (e.g. guidance on delivering sessions, engaging parents). There was variation in the extent to which CRC champions and teachers used the Lab due to time limitations.

Ongoing support included emails and phone calls from the CRC Project team to check in on progress and communicate upcoming deadlines and information posted on the Choices Lab. The forum featured a discussion forum for all participating schools to discuss Choices and instant messaging for school staff to ask questions to the CRC Project team directly.

Teachers also described support systems within their schools between teachers delivering Choices, where they would share knowledge and provide support. In one school, Year Six Choices teachers had regular planning meetings to discuss what they would cover in the lessons and make changes to the resources where appropriate.

Delivery of Choices sessions

The Choices sessions were intended to be delivered by teachers over 11 sessions, where each lesson followed a different chapter of the Choices stories, collectively called Stolen Lives. Choices lessons in Years Five and Six focus on a different story with different characters, 'Marcus's Story' and 'Kwan's Story', respectively. Each session explores a different theme and set of aims. The delivery model proposed that pupils share iPads in small groups, of up to three, with a dedicated iPad for the teacher. Teachers were encouraged to facilitate pupil-led discussions rather than use a didactic teaching method. Facilitators modelled this approach during the training sessions.

Teaching practice

Teachers described the delivery style required to facilitate Choices lessons and how this was different from other lessons.

Choices required teachers to adopt the role of a facilitator to foster discussion between pupils. This change of role presented an initial challenge for some teachers, but this was overcome over the course of the programme. For example, one teacher reported initially avoiding personal discussions in the class to *'protect the children'* because they lacked the confidence to broach sensitive topics. Over time, they recognised the value of allowing pupils to relate the comic to their own experiences and allowed pupils to lead the discussions.

[24] The developers have clarified that the videos captured whole classroom settings in real schools.

The discursive nature of the sessions also had benefits for pupils' social and emotional development (see Acceptability). Pupils stated that they were able to voice their own opinions more than in other lessons and liked the fact that there wasn't always a right or wrong response to questions posed by the Choices stories:

'It's not like in the other lessons … but in the Choices lesson, you can say your opinion a bit more'. **Pupil**

Teachers alluded to the need for evidence of learning for other lessons, which was not a requirement of Choices. Some teachers still chose to collect evidence of learning, e.g. having pupils stick worksheets into exercise books or taking photographs of practical activities. This decision to evidence learning appeared to be influenced by individual school practice rather than being imposed by the CRC Project team.

Use of technology

Pupils read the Choices stories in small groups, sharing one iPad between them. In some cases, up to four pupils shared one iPad, which was higher than the recommended three per iPad. However, the number of iPads available may have varied by lesson; observations of Choices sessions showed that there were sometimes issues with iPads not being charged before the lesson or not working for other unknown reasons. It is not clear whether exceeding the number of pupils per iPad was expected to have an impact on learning or engagement. Typically, reading the Choices stories involved pupils reading silently in their groups, with one pupil controlling the iPad. However, teachers sometimes asked pupils to read aloud to the class or used a visualiser to project the iPad screen onto the board so the whole class could read together.

Behaviour management

Teachers were encouraged to establish ground rules with the class in the first Choices lesson in Years Five and Six. During an observed training session, facilitators emphasised the value of ground rules in supporting a safe environment for discussions about sensitive topics.

Ground rules were consistently implemented across evaluation schools. Development of ground rules followed discussions with pupils about appropriate behaviour when talking about sensitive topics. The rules were usually displayed during the lessons on the board and recapped at the start of lessons. Rules were typically related to respect, active listening and not discussing what other pupils shared outside of the lesson.

During focus groups, pupils were able to recall ground rules well. They were viewed as a useful framework for behaviour but not always stringently followed. This was particularly true for those around active listening, as interruptions were not always challenged by the teacher.

Other behaviour management systems were used in conjunction with the ground rules. For example, a 'thumbs up, thumbs down' system was used in one school, whereby successive thumbs down resulted in pupils being temporarily removed from the classroom.

Adaptations

RQ: How is the CRC Project implemented in practice, and what adaptations are made to delivery?

During training, teachers were encouraged to use resources flexibly and make adaptations to lesson plans where appropriate. In practice, reasons for adaptations broadly fell under two categories – addressing pupils' needs and improving the ease of delivery.

Addressing the needs of pupils

Teachers adapted the presentation slides to make them more appropriate for the pupils in the class. Adaptations included:

- adapting questions to make them more suitable for pupils of all abilities,
- simplifying the language used on the presentation slides,
- introducing more basic questions for discussion,
- using videos to supplement taught content on given topics and
- not teaching content if it had been covered in other lessons.

> *'If you didn't like things, you could take things out, add things, plus you had the lesson plan as well. So yes, everything was there. It was just picking out what we needed and making sure that the learning objective or the aim of the lesson was met'.* **Teacher**

Teachers also described adapting lesson plans for classes that needed more support (though they did not elaborate on why this was needed) by making them more structured and teacher-led. This meant the discursive element of the sessions was diluted, but sessions were better suited to pupils' needs.

In one school, Choices lessons were divided into two 30-minute sessions for the duration of the programme due to the perception that pupils could not sustain full attention for a one-hour lesson. This strategy was also employed for other lessons at the school as a response to disrupted teaching during COVID-19 lockdowns, which had affected pupils' ability to focus for long periods.

Improving ease of delivery

Teachers noted that there was a high level of detail in the lesson plans, which was not reflected on the presentation slides. One view was that this gave teachers the ability to tailor the slides as they saw fit, which had a positive impact on their teaching. However, another view was that the slides seemed incomplete and lacked information that would help to facilitate the lesson. The latter view may reflect a deviation from normal teaching practice, where presentation slides are used as prompts for the teacher in addition to instructing pupils. Teachers adapted the slides by adding additional information, e.g. adding more questions to stimulate discussion or adding context about the part of the story that an activity focussed on.

Another challenge was the teachers' ability to cover all the content in each lesson plan in a one-hour lesson (see Challenges and enablers). This meant that they had to select the parts of the lesson that they thought were most relevant or useful for pupils. It was unclear from interviews whether the CRC Project team anticipated this challenge and whether they encouraged teachers to be selective about the content they covered. In some cases, teachers were able to extend the length of the lesson to ensure the lesson content was taught in full, but this was not always possible:

'If you were to follow the [lesson plan] and literally go through every step, it would probably take an afternoon … to get through one session. We've learnt, right, take from it the main elements'. **Teacher**

Challenges and enablers

RQ: What are the challenges and enablers to delivering the intervention as intended?

During interviews, school staff were asked to reflect on the delivery of Choices during the 2021/22 academic year and identify the challenges and enablers that helped and hindered the planning and implementation of the programme.

Challenges

Teachers', champions' and pupils' accounts included a number of different barriers to implementing the programme as intended. These were discussed in relation to two elements: session delivery and overall planning.

Barriers to effective classroom delivery

One view was that there was **a large amount of content** to be covered in each lesson, which was a barrier to being able to fully explore the themes of the lesson. This led to teachers making adaptations to lesson plans. One approach was to be selective about the content teachers covered (see Adaptations) in order to prioritise depth of discussion. Other teachers made attempts to cover all of the content, which meant they did not explore some topics as fully as they wanted. This difference in approach may be due to a lack of clarity about how teachers should contend with the detailed lesson plans. Although teachers said they were encouraged to make adaptations to the lesson plans, it was not clear how much guidance they were given in doing so and whether there was any core content they were required to retain:

'I do feel like because there is so much to cover, sometimes you're paying lip service a little bit to things that maybe it would be better to take a step back and go, right, we're going to take a little bit longer talking about this'. **Teacher**

Another challenge was around **technological issues** relating to using iPads to read the Choices stories. Although pupils enjoyed reading the stories, the following factors impacted their overall satisfaction with the programme:

- Pupils found the text on the iPads too small, making it difficult to read in their groups.
- The Choices stories could only be viewed in portrait orientation on the iPad, which made it more difficult for multiple pupils to read.
- Checkpoint passwords were used to prevent pupils from reading ahead. However, pupils disliked having to enter these passwords at the beginning of every lesson. Pupils also sometimes typed them incorrectly (as the password was hidden), which they found frustrating.
- There was often not much text on the screen, and there was sometimes a mismatch between the words and the illustrations. This sometimes made it difficult for pupils to understand what was happening in the story.

Barriers to effective planning/organisation

Time was a key challenge for CRC champions, who reported difficulties completing all of the administrative tasks associated with the role.

CRC champions perceived the amount and frequency of correspondence to be too high. They reported feeling overwhelmed by the number of emails they were sent and the number of tasks they were asked to

do. One view was that the amount of correspondence may have been more manageable if the champion could be released from other responsibilities and could dedicate their time to planning CRC. Although this is a decision for the school, this may not be feasible in many cases.

CRC champions also found managing Choices teachers challenging on top of their existing responsibilities. It was time-consuming to make sure teachers had completed CRC tasks each week, particularly in schools with multiple Choices teachers. Champions thought that coordinating staff would be easier if Choices teachers also received the emails so that they were aware of deadlines and the champion did not have to act as an intermediary:

'[O]verall, there's an awful lot of good things about the sessions, but I just felt, at times, the additional work was too much for the benefits gained. It's a lot of additional work'. **CRC champion**

Another barrier was the timing of emails containing lesson plans. CRC champions were sent a weekly email with lesson materials the week before they were due to deliver that lesson. Champions said this made it challenging to prepare for the lesson in time. Schools in their second year of programme delivery revisited the emails from the previous year rather than waiting for the weekly email for this reason. It would therefore be useful for schools to receive the materials up front to relieve pressure on teachers.

Enablers

Teachers and champions described factors that enabled effective delivery and effective planning of Choices.

Enablers of effective classroom delivery

Teachers cited the **clarity of CRC resources** as a factor that helped them deliver the sessions effectively. Lesson plans, in particular, were described as clear and straightforward to use, which made it easy to plan lessons, reducing the burden on teachers. Teachers also liked that they were encouraged to use resources flexibly, as it gave them the freedom to tailor the sessions to their class:

'Choices, the way it's been laid out, the way the resources are, it's all common sense, I think. […] if you're a competent teacher, I think it's not going to be difficult to work out'. **Teacher**

Additionally, teachers praised the **digital mode of delivery**, i.e. the use of iPads, as it was particularly effective in engaging pupils. They attributed this to the '*novelty factor'*, as technology was not commonly used in other lessons, and the interactive elements of the comic giving the stories a game-like quality. These elements helped keep the more reluctant readers in the class engaged with the content.

Enablers of effective planning/organisation

CRC champions cited the responsiveness of the CRC Project team as an important factor that facilitated effective planning (see Acceptability).

Acceptability of support

RQ: Is the intervention acceptable to teachers and children? How engaged are teachers and children in the intervention?

Training and support

Views on training

The training was generally well-received by teachers, who believed that it had adequately prepared them to teach Choices. Criticisms of the training centred around the delivery mode and content of the sessions.

The CRC Project team prefers to offer in-person training; however, COVID-19 restrictions meant that the majority of training had to move online. Participants who attended this mode of training stated that they would have preferred an in-person session. One view was that online training lacked the opportunity for in-person discussion with other teachers, which they believed would be beneficial for discussing different approaches to delivery. Participants who had attended both online training and in-person training similarly preferred the latter, as more content was covered and there was more discussion between participants.

Another reflection on the online training was that the content was slightly too long and repetitive. For example, one teacher deemed it unnecessary to be shown both a walkthrough of the iPads and a video of a session being delivered.

An observation of an online training session revealed that participants were apprehensive about using technology in the lessons, which was evidenced by questions in instant messages and conversations between participants in breakout rooms, e.g. about requesting iPads. This concern appeared to have distracted participants and diluted the other key learnings of the training, e.g. around facilitating group discussion.

After the observed training session, one facilitator reflected that participants were active and engaged in the session. However, they believed that the larger group size meant that there was more reluctance to contribute.

Teachers expressed that the Choices Lab was an effective tool for communicating with the CRC Project team and finding resources. They reported that it was useful to have resources all in one place and was an easy way to get in touch with the CRC Project team when a quick response was required. The open forum was a useful platform to see if other teachers had similar questions to theirs, which had been answered. The forum also gave them ideas for how they could deliver sessions at their own school.

However, teachers suggested some of the resources provided by the CRC Project team could have been improved. Lesson plans were very detailed, but this was not reflected in the presentation slides. This meant that teachers who did not make adaptations to the slides relied heavily on the iPad, which made it more difficult to deliver the sessions and be responsive to the class. The slides alone were therefore not adequate for delivering the sessions. The training for Choices does highlight that the slides are not designed to be used as a standalone resource and that preparation is key to ensuring teachers get the best outcomes from each session[25]. However, interviews with teachers suggest that they did not always understand how they should be adapting the resources. As reliance on the iPad during the session was not intended, teachers needed more clarity about the requirement to adapt the resources themselves, as this approach was not taken by all teachers:

[25] The CRC Project team clarified this in their response to the report.

'I sometimes worry that the way that I've adapted it might be … making it come away from the way that it's intended to have been delivered'. **Teacher**

Views on ongoing support

Although CRC champions and teachers considered the volume of communications to be high, they reported having clear communication channels with the CRC Project team, particularly with Lime. The CRC Project team were described as very responsive to questions and concerns that schools raised. Champions found these fast response times particularly helpful, as there was a lot of information in emails and on the Lab, which made it difficult to quickly find an answer or locate a resource. Staff also liked having a named individual who they could contact rather than having to find out which person or team a query should be directed to:

'There's always somebody to ask, and to be honest, for me, that's helped, rather than trawling through hundreds of emails trying to find the email that gives you the detail'. **CRC champion**

Choices content/delivery

Teachers generally found the content and format of the Choices sessions to be acceptable for the school and appropriate for pupils.

Choices topics

The topics covered in Choices lessons were occasionally sensitive in nature; however, interviews suggested they were generally acceptable for pupils and teachers. Pupils indicated that although some topics made them feel uncomfortable due to the seriousness of the subject matter, e.g. internet grooming, they were comfortable with most of the session content. Some teachers also reported initial feelings of discomfort facilitating discussions about grooming, as they hadn't had to deliver this type of content before. Indeed, the CRC Project team anticipated this concern; training sessions contained a dedicated segment about Session 7, which included content about grooming. The facilitators also signposted resources on the Choices Lab about how to facilitate discussions on the topic.

The above finding that pupils found the atmosphere of Choices lessons comfortable was underscored in one focus group, where pupils were asked to write down a word that described their experience of Choices. Words selected were unanimously positive – they included 'happy', 'great', 'relaxed', 'inspired', 'truthful', 'fun', 'grateful' and 'relatable'. This suggests pupils in this group generally had a positive impression of the content and format of the lessons.

Pupils described some aspects of the Choices stories they disliked, for example, the lack of backstory about the characters, repetitiveness of the key messages and lack of exploration of different characters. Additionally, Year Six pupils were disappointed that the story ended on a cliffhanger and that they couldn't find out the conclusion to the story. The CRC Project team clarified that this was a deliberate decision, aiming to demonstrate that young people can change the outcome, no matter how late it seems. However, this message did not seem to come across to teachers or pupils; therefore, it may need to be covered more explicitly in training or resources. Teachers gave positive evaluations of the Choices stories but thought there was sometimes a tenuous link between the comic and the session content. For example, the lesson on grooming was not thought to be strongly related to the content of the story.

Class discussions

School staff deemed the focus on pupil discussion an important feature of the programme, which had a positive effect on pupils' development outside of academic subjects. Discussions aided spoken language and social skills, which had been *'hit hard'* by online learning during COVID-19 school closures. The programme gave pupils the vocabulary and opportunity to discuss difficult topics and talk about their concerns with their peers and a trusted adult in a safe environment. The programme was therefore seen to address the needs of the pupils:

'I think it's a weight off some of the children's shoulders to talk about some of these issues. I just tried to create that really safe environment where they could'. **CRC champion**

While pupils' reflections about Choices mostly concerned the Choices stories and the group activities, pupils also articulated that they liked being able to share their opinions and discuss the topics with the whole class.

Despite positive views about discussions, some teachers thought the benefits were reduced because lesson timings limited the amount teachers could explore different topics in discussions (see Challenges and enablers). The tension between the time available to deliver sessions and the depth of exploration of topics impacted teachers' assessments of the overall value of the programme. Teachers suggested simplifying lesson plans to make them more manageable to deliver. Reflections about not being able to cover topics in as much depth as they would like to indicate that teachers would prefer lesson plans to cover fewer topics in greater depth.

Activities

Pupils reflected that they would like to be able to move around more during the lessons. Pupils did not give the impression that they were more active in other classroom-based lessons, so this may reflect the perception that Choices is different and more 'fun' than other lessons. Descriptions of Choices activities from interviews and observations of Choices lessons suggest that these could not easily be made more dynamic in their current format due to the focus on reading the stories and written activities:

'We're just sitting down. That's the bit that I don't like. We're not active'. **Pupil**

Engagement

RQ: Is the intervention acceptable to teachers and children? How engaged are teachers and children in the intervention?

Feedback from teachers and pupils indicated that there was a high level of pupil engagement during the sessions. While improvements were suggested around the use of iPads and session activities, pupils liked the format and content of the Choices lessons. Teachers also showed engagement with the training and delivery of the programme.

Choices comic

Pupils generally liked reading the Choices stories and were able to recall and describe the parts of the comic that they had particularly enjoyed. Teachers sensed that pupils could relate to the characters in the comic and their experiences and that this was a key draw for them. Pupils in Year Six who enjoyed playing video games said they related to the main character, Kwan, as he shares this interest and part of the Year Six story is told through a video game that he plays. Although pupils said they did not always relate to the characters'

actions, they questioned their actions and poor decision-making, showing a high level of engagement with key lessons of the stories.

Feedback suggests pupils found the Choices stories engaging. In one focus group, pupils begrudged the fact that other classes were at different stages of the comic, as they wanted to talk about the comic with their friends, which suggests the stories were successful in evoking interest and discussion. Pupils sometimes expressed that they liked parts of the stories where characters made bad decisions (e.g. where a character acted aggressively), perhaps because those scenes were the more 'exciting' elements of the story.

Pupils were complimentary about the comic book format and interactive elements of the stories, perhaps because of the contrast to other lessons at school. Pupils enjoyed using the iPads because the Choices stories were interactive, engaging and appealed to their interests, e.g. gaming:

'[B]ecause of the layout on it, in a comic, it made it more interesting, more child friendly, more adaptable to them'. **Teacher**

However, there were mixed responses to some of the interactive elements of the Choices stories. Generally, pupils enjoyed the sound effects that are triggered by interacting with the iPad; however, others found these noises disruptive. This was reflected in a Choices lesson observation, where pupils intentionally triggered a phone ringing noise throughout the duration of the lesson:

'It makes some weird noises ... That always happens, and then it disrupts the class'. **Pupil**

Choices activities

Pupils enjoyed practical activities where they did not just have to sit and listen to the teacher, particularly interactive activities, such as role play and games. Views on written activities were more varied. These often involved thinking about characters' motivations and making judgements about their actions. Both pupils and teachers referred to the 'inner friend/inner critic' activity, where pupils were asked to write down characters' beliefs about themselves. Some pupils enjoyed the 'inner critic' element because they were able to write negative things about characters they didn't like. This suggests pupils liked that the Choices format allowed them to express their views without the expectation of getting the 'right' answer.

Teachers

Teachers demonstrated sustained engagement throughout the programme, from initial training to implementation. During an online training session, we observed teachers taking notes throughout, submitting questions in the chat and virtually 'raising their hand' to ask questions. They were also engaged during breakout room activities, where they discussed how pupils might respond to discussions around identity. Furthermore, teachers reported wanting more opportunities to share ideas and learnings with other participating schools. This shows a commitment to delivering the programme to a high standard and finding solutions to the challenges they faced.

Teachers were also engaged in delivering the sessions. This was evident from their efforts to adapt resources to help pupils get the most out of the sessions, their concerns about covering the content fully and as intended and their enthusiasm when recalling the positive impact on pupils.

Evidence of feasibility: Postcode to the Globe (targeted component)

In this chapter, we report our findings on the targeted component of the programme. We cover reach and dosage, programme delivery, adaptations, challenges and enablers, and acceptability and engagement for participants. In each section, we discuss any variation in terms of group and one-on-one mentoring where relevant.

Reach and dosage

RQ: What is the intervention reach and dosage?

Delivery of the targeted component was largely consistent for group mentoring. However, one-on-one mentoring was less consistently delivered across evaluation schools, both in terms of numbers of pupils receiving this support and numbers of sessions delivered. Table 11 provides an overview of the targeted component's reach and dosage. Our analysis relates to pupils in the evaluation dataset (n = 997), which is a subset of all pupils who received the CRC Project in evaluation schools (due to attrition, including parental opt-out). As mentoring is a targeted component for a small proportion of pupils, the reach and dosage results, particularly for one-on-one mentoring, should be treated with some caution due to the small sample size.

Table 11. Overview of mentoring delivery 2021/22

Mentoring delivery in 2021/22 across evaluation schools
Recipients Pupils from Years Five and Six took part in mentoring; group mentoring took place in all evaluation schools. However, in three out of 12 schools, there was no one-on-one mentoring. Across the evaluation sample as a whole, 150 pupils (15%) received the targeted component[26]; 20 pupils from this group (2% of the whole sample, 13% of the targeted group) received one-on-one mentoring. The full breakdown is as follows: 130 (13%) received group mentoring only, 12 (1%) received both one-on-one and group mentoring and a small number of cases appear to have received one-on-one mentoring only[27]. These figures mean that the target proportions for the mentoring component (10% receive mentoring; 20% of this group receive one-on-one mentoring) have been met at the evaluation cohort level[28]. The data *at the school level* shows a wide range in the proportion of pupils receiving targeted support (11% to 23%). This indicates that in each school, the programme achieved its target of having at least 10% of pupils receive the targeted component and that in some schools, a much larger proportion of pupils did so[29]. In contrast, the data at the school level shows a smaller range for the proportion receiving one-on-one mentoring, from 0% to 4% of pupils. Analysis of the evaluation dataset shows that in three schools, no pupils received one-on-one mentoring. This aligns with qualitative data that in one school, there was no Year Six one-on-one mentoring due to pressures related to COVID-19 catch-up[30].

[26] Identified as those who attended at least one one-on-one/group mentoring session.

[27] The CRC Project intention for the one-on-one targeted component is that only pupils who had group mentoring go on to have one-on-one mentoring. This finding might reflect errors in the attendance data or suggest that in a small number of cases, the one-on-one mentoring is not happening as intended.

[28] While the proportion of the targeted group receiving one-on-one mentoring (13%) in our sample is below the target of 20%, this base for the calculation is inflated due to the targeted component being delivered to more pupils than intended. If we assume the original target of 10% receiving the targeted component (n = 100 pupils), then 20 pupils receiving one-on-one mentoring equates to 20% of that group.

[29] This ties in with qualitative evidence about schools increasing the number of mentoring places available, detailed later in this chapter.

[30] The developers, in response to this report, have clarified that at three schools, one-on-one mentoring was only delivered in one year group (either Year Five or Year Six) and that this was due to one-on-one mentoring allocations being based on the total number of pupils selected for the targeted component in that school. The developers note that taking this into account, the school as a whole received the appropriate dosage of one-on-one mentoring sessions.

Frequency Group sessions were delivered first, followed by one-on-one sessions. All sessions took place weekly. This was consistent across schools where both mentoring components were delivered. Mentoring took place during a range of lessons, which varied between schools.
Duration Mentors reported that sessions lasted an hour. Pupils had varying understandings of the length of group sessions, reporting session length as 25 minutes to an hour. Pupils receiving one-on-one sessions were unsure whether sessions lasted half an hour or an hour. These variations may be due to pupils' recall.
Number of sessions The intention was eight sessions for group mentoring and four sessions for one-on-one mentoring. Mentors' accounts suggest that the group and one-on-one sessions were being delivered as intended, though our fieldwork took place before delivery was completed, so we could not ascertain the total number of sessions. The quantitative data suggests more of a range, with between seven and eight possible sessions for group mentoring and between one and eight possible sessions for one-on-one mentoring across evaluation schools. Pupils receiving group mentoring (n = 142) attended an average of 7.3 sessions (92% of possible group mentoring sessions) each. Around two-thirds (63%) of these pupils attended all possible group mentoring sessions. Among the 20 pupils who received one-on-one mentoring, the average attendance was 3.75 sessions (94% of possible sessions). Three-quarters (75%) of these pupils attended all possible one-on-one mentoring sessions[31].
Mentors per school Mentors worked in between six and nine schools each and had worked in some of the same schools the previous academic year. Mentors typically delivered group sessions in pairs and were paired with four to five other mentors. However, they also worked alone in some schools, where there were only a few pupils per group. In these cases, the most experienced mentors were selected to work with smaller groups[32]. Mentors delivered both group and one-on-one sessions.
Communication with parents Letters were schools' main method of communicating with parents about pupil selection for mentoring. Some teachers and champions also spoke to parents directly about CRC and mentoring.

Programme implementation

RQ: How is the CRC Project implemented in practice, and what adaptations are made to delivery?

In this section, we report on the key elements of delivery in turn: mentor training, pupil selection and session delivery.

Mentor training

Emerge oversees the mentors' initial and ongoing training. Mentors reported that initial training covered background information on Emerge and the CRC Project, including the connection between Choices and mentoring. Mentors completed two hours of shadowing prior to beginning session delivery.

Mentors stated that ongoing training took place regularly every four to six weeks and included peer learning; skills building, such as improvisation; and safeguarding procedures and incident reporting. As part of the ongoing training, Emerge funded mentors to access online courses, such as a diploma in working with children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

Mentors reported that Emerge provided resources, including session outlines and the Choices comics. Mentors recalled that Emerge encouraged them to use resources flexibly in order to meet session objectives.

[31] Due to the wide range in the number of sessions available at different schools, statistics on pupil attendance are calculated on the basis of 'available' sessions for that pupil (derived from attendance data) rather than the intended number of sessions.

[32] This was clarified by the developers in response to this report.

Pupil selection

This section covers findings about the selection of pupils, including the case conference selection approach, the needs of selected pupils, pupils selected who did not take part and communication with parents and pupils.

Case conference approach

The plan was for schools to select 10% of the highest risk pupils from Years Five and Six for group mentoring, and 20%[33] of these pupils would also be selected for one-on-one mentoring. The intention was to select pupils through a case conference approach (a meeting between Lime and CRC champions) using well-being data from a pupil questionnaire (the SCWBS) as a starting point and combining this with teacher knowledge. It was consistent across schools that teachers and champions discussed pupil selection in virtual meetings with Lime. Teachers and champions tended to view the selection for group and one-on-one mentoring as part of the same process. The CRC Project team has clarified (in response to this report) that this was the intention and has also stated that the selection of pupils for one-on-one mentoring was discussed during the case conference meetings and primarily based on the SCWBS data. Some schools involved additional staff in these meetings, such as class teachers, members of the senior leadership team or non-CRC school mentors. In limited cases, decisions on one-on-one mentoring were delayed, allowing time for pupils to be observed in group mentoring sessions.

Teachers and champions took three main approaches to combining the SCWBS with school knowledge during pupil selection, as shown in Figure 3. School staff were unsure whether some of these approaches (especially regarding the flexibility around the number of places available) were an intended part of the selection process or not. The CRC Project team have clarified that there was an intention to have some flexibility around the number of available places. However, interviews with school staff suggest that this was not clear and that it would be useful to have further clarification on this point in the future.

[33] The 20% could vary and was an average across the participating schools.

Figure 3. Overview of pupil selection approaches

SCWBS questionnaire results prioritised in selection	School knowledge of pupils prioritised in selection	Selection a collaborative process
Teachers and champions prioritised selection on Lime's expertise. Champions first identified pupils with low scores, then discussed with colleagues whether these pupils would benefit.	Champions first made initial selections based on school knowledge/pupil need, then reviewed SCWBS results. Teachers did not select pupils with low scores if they thought they would not benefit from mentoring. Teachers requested additional mentoring spaces for pupils they were concerned about but who had not scored low on SCWBS questions. In some cases, delivery was expanded to include these pupils. This links with quantitative data showing that more than 10% received mentoring in some schools. Champions thought some pupils did not answer SCWBS questions honestly/reliably, implying these pupils could be overlooked for support. Champions felt school knowledge of pupils addressed this.	Teachers and champions saw the selection process as a two-way *'professional dialogue'* with Lime. Teachers and champions valued the additional insight the SCWBS data provided.

Pupil needs

Mentors and champions reported that pupils selected through the case conference approaches detailed above required support for a wide range of needs. Participants, including teachers and champions, spoke about selecting pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs (SEMH). The reported SEMH needs included issues such as lack of confidence and problems making friends, and other issues arising for pupils who had suffered bereavements, had previous suicidal thoughts or were emotional due to pressures within their home life. Participants highlighted that they were surprised that those with behavioural issues were generally not identified by the SCWBS, given the programme content's discussion of gang violence[34]. Occasionally, teachers selected pupils with behavioural issues who they thought would benefit from mentoring, even if they did not score low on the SCWBS:

'We looked at the bottom children, the children who scored the lowest score on the survey, but there were a couple of individuals that they've included as well … most of those children, it seems to be the quieter, less sort of obvious, you know, children. The children that have got more issues with behaviour, etc., or we think might be vulnerable when they get older to things like being involved in gangs, they don't seem to be in that bottom ten. This year there were two individuals that we felt would really benefit from it, so they've included them as well, even though they didn't score quite as low on the survey'. **Teacher**

We note that participants did not generally talk in terms of children being at risk of criminality or exploitation; rather, they were seeking to identify children in the greatest need of support or who would benefit from mentoring. It is not clear to us as evaluators how this fits with the programme intention of selecting those most 'at risk'; it is also notable that this is a change from the feasibility study findings, where

[34] The CRC Project team has highlighted that the SCWBS is a measure of well-being rather than behavioural issues.

participants discussed pupils being selected for reasons that were more clearly linked to the risk of exploitation or criminality (Bury et al., 2022: 33).

Pupils selected who did not take part

Teachers and champions reported that some pupils who it was thought would benefit from mentoring did not receive mentoring sessions. This happened in two different circumstances:

- When **mentoring was not offered** because champions expected parents would not consent to their child's inclusion. Champions suggested these parents *'did not believe'* in this type of programme, having previously declined similar initiatives.
- When the selected **pupils chose not to take part** in one-on-one sessions when they were offered. Champions reported that this included pupils not wanting to be *'taken away'* from their classmates because they felt uncomfortable being the only ones leaving the group.

Communication of selection

Schools mainly communicated pupil selection to parents via letters. In some cases, following the written communication, champions received phone calls from parents requesting further information and wanting to discuss their child's selection. Champions emphasised to parents that *all* pupils were involved in the CRC Project. Champions implied this pre-empted parents' potential negative response to their child's selection in mentoring.

Some champions reported a lack of knowledge about the mentoring programme, which limited the depth of information they could provide to parents and their ability to encourage parents to consent for their child to take part (see Suggestions for refinement). Mirroring this finding, pupils also stated that teachers had told them they did not know what the mentoring programme involved.

Teachers, champions and pupils reported a variety of responses from parents to their child's selection for mentoring. Champions perceived parental responses to the programme as receptive in cases where parents were used to their children receiving similar support in school and/or in cases where parents thought the programme would promote behavioural improvements. In contrast, less receptive parental responses were perceived to stem from parents' concerns that their children's selection meant something was 'wrong'. Teachers and champions reflected that this may be due to parents perceiving mentoring as being a poor mental health intervention, similar to counselling, and their child not needing such support:

'A lot of those parents did call me because I think they heard the word "mentoring" and then instantly thought something was up; why did their child need support?' **Champion**

From pupil discussions, it appears schools did not take a uniform approach to communicating the selection and invitation to take part to pupils. Pupils' recall of being informed about selection varied, and they did not provide details on what information they were given.

Delivery of mentoring sessions

This section covers findings on mentoring delivery. The key themes that came out from participant accounts related to four different aspects: session structure, mentoring content and themes, mentors' delivery approach and style, and champions' roles.

Session structure

From observations and mentor interviews, sessions generally followed a consistent structure: an introduction and icebreaker (e.g. a simple game), a recap of the last session, and discussion and activities (e.g. role-play, worksheets) around the session's key concept.

Ground rules were established at the start of the group mentoring programme. Examples included having fun, not laughing at other pupils and there being no right or wrong answers in sessions. Some pupils were not familiar with the term 'ground rules' and did not see the rules in mentoring as being distinct from general school rules, e.g. not talking over others.

Content and themes

Participants' descriptions of mentoring session content reflected key aims of the CRC Project:

- 'Growth and fixed mindsets' and goal setting were recurring topics in pupil discussions. Pupils described setting goals and steps to achieve these. Although pupils were confident using the terms 'growth and fixed mindset', they did not always expand on their understanding of these.
- 'Confidence building' was prominent in mentors' and pupils' accounts. Mentors viewed building pupils' self-confidence as a key responsibility and described actively focusing on building pupils' self-belief. Pupils similarly were able to provide examples of activities which involved verbalising positive feelings about themselves.
- 'Choosing the right friends' appeared to address the project aim of making positive choices. For example, pupils recalled activities reflecting on the consequences of having a negative friendship and how they would respond.

Mentoring is intended to complement the universal Choices sessions. Mentors described Choices stories as covering similar content to mentoring and reported using the stories as a '*launchpad'* and as useful '*common ground'* to *'fall back on'* in sessions. Reflecting this, we observed pupils referring to Kwan's story in a group mentoring session.

Mentors' delivery approach and style

A recurrent theme in mentors' accounts was the distinctiveness of mentoring sessions and mentors' delivery styles in comparison to other school activities. Mentors described being *'very adamant'* in telling pupils that mentoring was *'not a class or formal classroom setting'.* Acting as positive role models, sharing challenges they had faced and offering pupils a forum where they could freely explore questions about life were some features of mentors' approaches.

Mentors described taking a personal and open approach to their role, including revealing personal details about themselves. They viewed this as being distinctive to teachers' practice. Mentors' emphasis on connecting content to real-life experiences included discussing their own personal lives and experiences, such as sharing the fact that they had SEND and/or learning differences:

'When you tell them, "When I was at school, I didn't get this, or I had ADHD", and they're like, "What? Really?" It's just humanising things'. **Mentor**

Pupils echoed this in focus group discussions, as they were aware of the personal details of mentors, such as having dyslexia. Pupils appeared to relate to mentors' openness about this.

Mentors felt that their distinctive role and approach (different from other adults in pupils' lives, such as parents and teachers) made sessions a space where pupils could freely explore issues and concerns. One view from mentors was that they wanted to be positive role models as an alternative to negative influences on pupils. They also encouraged pupils to be themselves rather than simply emulating peers:

'I want other kids who feel like they're not normal [to feel] like it doesn't matter … as long as I'm doing me'.

Mentor

Pupils also reflected on practical aspects of the mentors' delivery style and gave examples of mentors participating in and supporting their engagement in activities. Pupils appreciated that mentors let them think about questions and come back to them if they were unsure, seeming to favour this approach to more pressurised learning environments. Both pupils and mentors gave an example of discussing secondary school in sessions. Pupils said these discussions alleviated fears about the transition to secondary school and meant they felt more positive about it:

'We had a lot of questions about secondary school, and [the mentors] made me more … positive about it because I was really nervous at first, but now I'm starting to look forward to it a bit'. **Pupil**

Pupils and mentors outlined contrasting approaches to discipline. Mentors described their classroom approach as less reliant on authority and more focused on explaining why certain choices were beneficial. In contrast, some pupils criticised mentors for having told them not to talk during sessions and recalled pupils being told to leave a classroom to have a discussion with a mentor about their misbehaviour.

Role of CRC champions

Champions reported having differing approaches to organising mentoring sessions. One approach was to concentrate on administrative responsibilities, such as arranging rooms and communicating with Lime, and not get involved with mentoring implementation. A different approach was champions having more involvement with day-to-day delivery and contact with mentors and seeking feedback from pupils. Champions with less involvement saw this as being advantageous to overseeing the programme, suggesting it would be inappropriate to observe sessions or '*interfere'* with mentoring.

Adaptations

RQ: How is the CRC Project implemented in practice, and what adaptations are made to delivery?

Mentors discussed making various adaptations to mentoring delivery, including changes to meet pupil needs and/or space available, managing group dynamics and extending the mentoring offer.

Mentors reported regularly adapting content and activities to pupils' needs and interests, an expected approach to delivery. For example, mentors adapted their delivery in response to pupils' requests, such as introducing more creative activities when pupils were unhappy to miss art lessons to attend mentoring.

The space allocated for mentoring could limit which activities were possible and required mentors to adapt their delivery to what was possible in the environment. Mentors reported specifically that not having a whiteboard meant having a more discussion-based session, where otherwise, using a whiteboard would have been helpful (see Challenges).

The challenge of managing group dynamics between boys and girls (see Challenges) also led to mentors splitting groups to match mentors and pupils by gender.

Champions and teachers reported that mentors agreed to expanding delivery (see Pupil selection). They reported that mentors agreed to include more pupils than intended in group sessions or offer extra sessions to an additional pupil.

Challenges and enablers

RQ: What are the challenges and enablers to delivering the intervention as intended?

Participants were asked to reflect on mentoring delivery during the 2021/22 academic year. This section describes the challenges and enablers that helped or hindered the planning and implementation of the programme.

Challenges

There were a number of challenges related to pupil selection, practicalities of delivery, group dynamics and the structure of one-on-one sessions.

Pupil selection

Champions reported two factors that made the pupil selection process challenging. First, it had been difficult to select only 10% of the cohort because the number of children with low SCWBS scores exceeded the number of mentoring spaces. In other words, more than 10% were identified. In this case, the number of mentoring places was not expanded to meet the demand. Second, champions felt it was sometimes challenging to accurately gauge pupil need, as SCWBS scores might reflect pupils giving expected rather than honest answers or misunderstanding questions. Champions added that some misunderstandings were due to learning difficulties or pupils learning English as an additional language.

Mentors also had views on pupil selection and whether the right pupils were selected for the right type of support. However, they did not have formalised input into the pupil selection process for group or one-on-one sessions.

Delivery logistics

Mentors reported that poor communication from schools resulted in sessions not taking place. In such cases, mentors were unsure whether schools did not have their contact details, did not know who to contact or were too busy to inform mentors of changes to the timetable.

Mentors and pupils described some spaces allocated for mentoring as not '*fit for purpose*'. Mentors reported the following spaces as examples of this: dining halls, narrow conference rooms, corridors and isolation areas. Pupils provided an example of two mentoring groups taking place simultaneously and this not being conducive to the smooth running of the session. In these cases, mentors reported a perception that the importance of schools providing a suitable space had not been prioritised. Mentors noted that finding appropriate spaces was particularly challenging for smaller schools.

Group mentoring: group dynamics

Mentors expressed that managing group dynamics between pupils with different needs could be challenging, as there was a 'lack of fit' between pupils:

'I think, sometimes, by just putting together all these groups of students, "Oh, they scored low or whatever, let's put them all together", sometimes all the students aren't suited'. **Mentor**

Other concerns discussed by mentors included managing less confident pupils being intimidated by more confident pupils. In particular, sessions with mostly pupils of one gender could be intimidating for pupils of the other gender (e.g. girls could become more reserved and not contribute to discussions around very animated boys). Mentors addressed challenging gendered group dynamics by methods such as splitting groups and forming separate smaller boys' and girls' groups (see Adaptations). In one case, a school requested two female mentors for an all-girls group. The mentors believed this fostered a *'big sister, little sister kind of feeling'* between themselves and their pupils.

Mentors reported that engaging both disruptive and quieter pupils in group sessions was particularly challenging. Mentors believed that quieter pupils (including SEMH and SEND pupils) might be better suited to one-on-one sessions and/or alternative interventions, such as counselling. A particular example was a pupil who described herself as having 'sensory issues' and felt uncomfortable in the group sessions.

Disruptive pupils had to be engaged individually to prevent disruption to the whole group. Mentors thought because they had emphasised that mentoring was not a traditional classroom environment, some pupils '*tested the boundaries'*.

One-on-one sessions: programme logistics and scope

The number of sessions and timing of sessions were the main challenges mentors reported specific to one-on-one mentoring (see Suggestions for refinement). Mentors reported building deeper bonds with pupils in one-on-one sessions but felt that four sessions were too short to fully use the relationship built; by the time mentors had got to know pupils, the sessions were finishing. Second, some one-on-one sessions were delivered some time after group sessions. This meant mentors could not easily expand on themes from group sessions, which were less fresh in pupils' minds. This delivery schedule made it more challenging for mentors to explore a pupil's behaviour in group sessions with them in one-on-one sessions.

Enablers

Mentors discussed some key factors as enablers to programme delivery, including their own delivery style, tailoring session content and building positive working relationships with champions.

Mentors reported that taking an informal approach to facilitating mentoring sessions and tailoring content to pupils' interests engaged pupils. Listening to pupils' opinions and having fun positively affected pupils' behaviour. Pupils recognised and valued this. Mentors described looking at resources pupils had made to enable learning about pupil interests and 'reading the room' to incorporate topics of pupil discussion into sessions.

Mentors discussed approaches to help manage dynamics between boys and girls, including matching pupils with mentors of the same gender or having single-gender group sessions (see Challenges). The CRC

Feasibility study report found that single-gender groups also had their challenges[35]; therefore, we are not including this as a recommendation for future delivery.

Other factors that facilitated delivery included mentors developing their own delivery style and working with the same mentor in multiple schools. Mentors reported that honing their delivery style and being familiar with the content helped them manage the volume of content and also prevented sessions from becoming repetitive. Working with the same mentor made delivery flow better and feel less scripted.

Finally, mentors reported that ongoing relationships with champions enabled successful delivery and noted that working in the same school for repeated years strengthened these relationships. Mentors appreciated that champions made rooms available and updated mentors about schedules and pupils' behaviour when relevant.

Acceptability of support

RQ: Is the intervention acceptable to teachers, mentors and children? How engaged are teachers, mentors and children in the intervention?

This section discusses the acceptability of each of the programme elements in turn: mentor training, pupil selection and the delivery of sessions.

Mentor training

Mentors found their initial training acceptable and said it prepared them for delivering the targeted component. Mentors were also positive about ongoing training, stating it was relevant, kept skills up to date and enabled them to try new things. They valued learning about the Choices element and its links with mentoring, which helped them close a *'disconnect'* between Choices and mentoring:

'I think the training on that helped it to become more fluid and more coherent, so when you're delivering, it's not seen as a separate entity. I think that is highly important, and the training … helped me to link it even more fluidly myself'. **Mentor**

Mentors appreciated training where they could learn from experienced peers, *'bounce ideas'* off them and hear how they implemented the programme. Mentors also valued the improvisation training in which they learned new games to use in sessions and became more confident in trying new ways of doing things in sessions. They also appreciated gaining qualifications from online courses in addition to training.

However, mentors thought some information could be communicated better outside of training sessions, either as resources sent by email or in a separate session (see Suggestions for refinement). As examples, mentors noted that establishing rotas and covering content-heavy safeguarding material was not an effective use of training time.

[35] The CRC feasibility study report noted that single-gender groups (for boys) could result in poor behaviour and engagement (Bury et al., 2022:35), while in our study, they were seen as an enabling strategy to address issues in mixed-gender groups. The implication is that group dynamics can be challenging in both circumstances.

Pupil selection

Mentors and champions largely thought the pupil selection process was acceptable and selected the right pupils. Champions said evidence for the latter was that pupils who had accessed mentoring the previous academic year had scored higher in this year's SCWBS.

It was acceptable to mentors that selected pupils needed support for a range of reasons; they believed that mentoring should support a range of needs, including those that they implied might be considered relatively minor, such as a lack of confidence.

However, participant accounts noted aspects of pupil selection that were less acceptable for pupils and parents. Not all parents were happy about their child's selection (see Pupil selection), and not all pupils knew why they had been selected, what mentoring was and what to expect from mentoring. As a result, pupils reported feeling anxious before mentoring began and mentioned feeling nervous about who would be in their group, speaking in front of others and trying new activities.

At the start of the programme, pupils negatively associated mentoring with mental health or bad behaviour. Mentors reported addressing pupils' assumptions that they had been selected because of bad behaviour (pupils did not mention this association themselves). Pupils associated mentoring with mental health partly because of the similarity between the words. This association confused pupils, who thought that children did not need to be taught about mental health because children, unlike adults, could not be mentally ill. Pupils also reported feeling offended at being selected because of the perceived association with mental health. From the pupils' accounts, it seemed these negative responses were exacerbated by finding out about selection unexpectedly.

Mentors felt addressing this assumption should be the school's responsibility. While pupils needing mental health or behavioural support might be selected, this is not how mentoring is intended to be understood by pupils:

'We can only do our part once we step in the building … some of them have some negative emotions at the beginning'. **Mentor**

Pupils continued to associate mentoring with mental health and the attached stigma after receiving sessions, though they did not express feeling stigmatised themselves. For example, pupils discussed classmates who would benefit from mentoring as having *'something wrong with her*'. Nevertheless, pupils saw mentoring as beneficial, for example, wanting classmates to overcome disordered eating through the programme.

Mentors and pupils discussed whether pupils had a choice to participate. Mentors felt that the choice had been more up to parents, though they did not think pupils were forced to participate. One view among pupils was that they could choose to participate, while another was that they could not say they did not want to attend.

Delivery: mentors

Mentors were acceptable to teachers and champions, who were consistently positive about mentors. They reported that mentors were friendly, helpful, punctual and skilled at building rapport with pupils in short time frames:

'They knew what [outcomes] they wanted to target, they were always prepared, they were really friendly to the children. They didn't need much guidance from myself; they just came in, did what they needed to do and left. The children loved it'. **Champion**

Pupils also expressed positive views about mentors, describing them as engaging and kind. One view from pupils was that there was nothing their mentors could improve, although other views were more critical. Criticisms included mentors talking too much about themselves and acting like *'the centre of attention*'. Pupils connected this with mentors not giving pupils enough time to answer questions and, as a result, dominating sessions with their input.

Pupils also reflected on mentors' behaviour management, stating that some mentors were *'too strict'* and that others in the same school had '*better'*, more lenient mentors. For example, pupils criticised mentors for not allowing them to talk outside of designated spaces in sessions and not letting them get up from their chairs for activities. Finally, pupils also discussed mentors not always checking whether the whole group had understood activities or key words. This indicated that mentors could benefit from additional training, particularly around managing pupil behaviour (see Delivery optimisation).

Delivery: sessions

Mentoring content was consistently acceptable to mentors. Mentors reported topics were relevant and relatable to the challenges pupils faced and easily adapted to suit particular groups (see Enablers). Pupils and mentors both considered ground rules as effective and fair because the pupils themselves had decided the rules.

Pupils commented on aspects of mentoring delivery and content which they found less acceptable, namely perceiving an overlap between mentoring content and PSHE (especially on the subject of resilience) and the pace of sessions moving too quickly between new activities.

Delivering sessions in pairs was acceptable to mentors, enabling them to gain another perspective from each other, facilitating flexible delivery and enabling one mentor to deal with disruptive behaviour without interrupting the delivery of the group session.

More generally, teachers and champions felt they had limited knowledge and involvement with mentoring and would like to have increased awareness of this component of the CRC Project.

Engagement

RQ: Is the intervention acceptable to teachers, mentors and children? How engaged are teachers, mentors and children in the intervention?

Pupils

Mentors and champions reported pupils had largely engaged well and attributed this engagement to the positive relationships between pupils and mentors rather than to pupils' interest in session content. Mentors also felt pupil engagement was determined by how well they got to know pupils (see Enablers). Mentors expressed the view that learning about pupils' interests and fostering an open atmosphere in sessions facilitated building these positive relationships. On the other hand, pupils who expressed more negative views of their mentors tended to feel more ambivalent about mentoring overall.

Champions consistently reported seeing pupils eager to go to sessions and excited to see mentors around the school, again attributing this to pupils' positive relationships with mentors. Champions added that pupils liked the fact that in mentoring, they received more attention than in their usual lessons and that pupils related to mentors because mentors were young, a factor mentors also believed supported pupils feeling comfortable.

Pupils had a range of views on mentoring overall. One view was that it was more enjoyable to spend school time in mentoring than in regular lessons. Activities and content which pupils engaged with positively included practical, game and challenge-based activities, which they discussed with enthusiasm. Mentors also reported that pupils enjoyed these activities. Pupils further demonstrated their engagement by connecting some activities to broader themes, like friendship and teamwork, and reporting they had taken resources from sessions home to put on their bedroom walls.

Pupils also reported feeling comfortable sharing their thoughts because they felt at ease sharing both with mentors and other pupils in their group.

More critical views expressed by pupils were that mentor questions could be '*boring'*, suggesting these questions were obvious or artificial, for example, whether they would rather be rich or poor. Pupils also reported that they did not enjoy activities where there was a lot of writing. A further criticism expressed was disliking reading in front of the group; girls described instances where they felt shy and boys in the group were laughing (see Challenges on gendered group dynamics).

Different groups of pupils

Mentors reported varied levels of engagement between different pupil groups. In particular, some pupils with SEND and/or other learning needs found engaging in group sessions challenging. Mentors discussed autistic and less verbal pupils feeling uncomfortable participating in a group environment, while in some cases, these pupils had gone on to engage well in one-on-one sessions (when this had been offered).

Similarly, mentors reported pupils with lower attention spans had been disruptive in group sessions but more engaged in one-on-one sessions. Mentors, however, stressed it was important not to see these pupils as unsuited to group sessions altogether:

'They're the ones that you really want then because it's that type of stereotyping that we're trying to avoid. It just means we have to work a bit harder, and then when you do get them to engage, it makes it even sweeter'. **Mentor**

Mentors found it harder to engage Year Five pupils, described spending more time contextualising content for them than Year Six pupils and reported a noticeable difference in maturity between Years Five and Six.

Mentors

We observed that mentors were consistently engaged in training and delivery. In the observed online training, mentors were eager to share experiences and contributed enthusiastically. In observed group sessions, mentors were energetic and promoted pupil engagement in discussions and activities. Mentors' reflections on delivery after observed sessions also demonstrated engagement, with mentors considering the learning styles of different groups and the most effective approaches to delivering particular sessions.

Evidence of promise

In this chapter, we assess whether there is evidence of promise towards CRC programme outcomes. Our analysis considers the extent to which outcomes align with those specified in the logic model[36] and also notes any adverse or unintended consequences. We start with our findings on pupil outcomes before presenting evidence about outcomes for teachers, mentors and schools. The whole chapter draws on qualitative findings; analyses of quantitative data are only included in the Pupil outcomes section.

Pupil outcomes

RQ: What is the change in children's social and emotional outcomes and resilience?

In this section, we present findings on pupil outcomes from the quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative findings draw on data collected in the pupil survey, which pupils undertook twice, once at the start of the 2021/22 academic year (baseline) and once at the end (endline) (see the Methods section for more details). The survey included three separate scales, which measure well-being (SCWBS), mental health (measured in terms of emotional and behavioural difficulties) (MAMF) and resilience (SRS). While well-being and mental health are not explicitly listed in the logic model, they can be seen as overarching concepts which align with several logic model outcomes. Resilience is identified as a long-term pupil outcome, and our SRS scale included subsets of questions about peer relationships, empathy, communication, and goals and aspirations, which all correspond to outcomes in the logic model (the scales are mapped to the outcomes in Table 4 earlier in this report).

The qualitative findings are based on focus group discussions and interviews with pupils, teachers, mentors and CRC champions. These took place during the spring and summer terms, and most occurred while programme delivery was still underway.

While the research question specifies children's social and emotional/psychological outcomes, the quantitative data (MAMF behavioural difficulties subscale) and qualitative interviews also captured behavioural outcomes. We have included these behavioural outcomes in the discussion in this section.

We start by presenting the evidence on pupil outcomes at an overall level, first drawing on data from the outcome measures to give an overview of pupils' well-being, mental health and resilience and then presenting more detailed qualitative findings about perceived outcomes. The subsequent section examines variations in outcomes for different groups of children, again drawing on both quantitative and qualitative data. Throughout, we note where the findings from the different methods converge and where they do not.

Overall outcomes

This pilot aims to identify evidence of promise; in the case of the quantitative data, this would be seen in pre-post changes in pupils' scores relating to social and emotional outcomes and resilience. Improvement in terms of our outcome measures would be seen in an *increase* in well-being (SCWBS) scores, a *decrease* in reported emotional and behavioural difficulties (total and subscale MAMF) scores and an *increase* in resilience (SRS) scores. These findings would also be relevant in determining whether one of the success

[36] The original logic model also includes outcomes for parents, but our protocol did not include these outcomes, and as we were unable to speak to parents during the evaluation, we did not collect data on this.

criteria for the pilot (discussed in Readiness for trial) has been met ('*that pupil pre-post data shows mean improvement in outcomes*').

Overall, analysis of pupil pre-post survey data reveals limited changes. Without a control group, we cannot be confident that regression to the mean[37] did not affect pre-post changes. For instance, as baseline SCWBS and SRS scores in the sample were above the midpoint level of the scales, we might expect these scores to decrease over time, regardless. This has the potential to mask any true positive impact of the programme if there was one.

In contrast to the overall quantitative findings, one view (found among all groups of qualitative participants) was that a number of changes for pupils could be identified, including increased confidence, greater resilience and improved relationships with others. We describe this evidence later in this section.

However, we also found that participants were cautious about making claims about changes in outcomes. Indeed, one view from mentors, CRC champions and teachers was that they were not able to identify any changes in pupil outcomes. While this is the view that most closely aligns with the overall quantitative findings, the reasons participants gave for this view allude to the fact that this was not necessarily due to a lack of change but rather the fact that they were not well placed to assess it. Reasons were varied but broadly fell into the following categories[38]:

- *Distance from pupils*. For example, mentors felt schools would have a better understanding of outcomes for pupils, whereas CRC champions felt classroom teachers would be better able to assess outcomes for pupils.
- *Lack of post-programme contact*. CRC champions explained that once Year Six pupils transition to secondary school, they have no further contact and, so, are unaware of the programme's impacts. Similarly, mentors stated that after mentoring concludes, they have no further contact with pupils and, so, are unsure of pupils' outcomes.
- *Uncertainty in attributing change*. Teachers did not feel confident to attribute change to the programme, particularly as the CRC Project coincided with pupils growing up. CRC champions and teachers expressed the view that the pupil questionnaire was the only certain way to measure change.
- *Behavioural issues*. Teachers said it was difficult to assess the impact of the programme on challenging year groups with behavioural issues.

Similarly, one view from pupils who received the targeted component was that they had not learnt anything as a consequence of mentoring.

Outcome measures

Analysis of pupil pre-post survey data for the whole sample (reported in Table 12) shows the following:

[37] Regression to the mean is a common statistical concept that refers to the fact that if one sample of a random variable is extreme (in this case, the score of baseline SCWBS or SRS), in the next sampling time (endline), the scores of the same variables are likely to be closer to their mean (since scores closer to the mean are generally more likely). This is common to occur in pre-post designs without a control group. As a result, the observed change cannot be attributed to intervention impact.

[38] In addition, as evaluators, we note that it can be challenging to collect data on outcomes through qualitative interviews with programme participants and delivery staff. They may not have reflected on programme outcomes, as that has not been their key focus.

- There was a small, non-significant decrease in average SCWBS scores, indicating that levels of well-being did not change from baseline to endline.
- Overall, MAMF scores did not change significantly. Scores for the Emotional Difficulties subscale decreased significantly over the trial period, although the observed standardised mean difference[39] indicates that this decrease in emotional difficulties was small (Ellis, 2010). In contrast, the Behavioural Difficulties scores did not differ significantly between baseline and endline.
- SRS scores decreased significantly between baseline and endline, indicating a fall in average levels of resilience, although this difference was small.

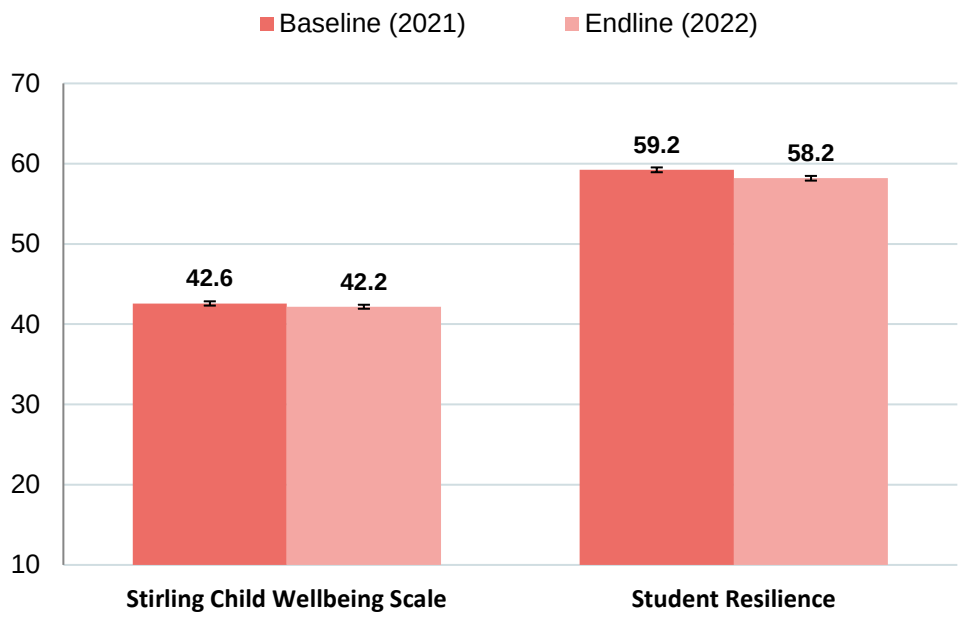
Table 12. Comparison of outcome scores at baseline and endline for the whole sample

Outcome	Baseline		Endline		Mean pre-post difference	t-statistic	p-value	Standardised mean difference
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD				
Stirling Child Wellbeing Scale	42.58	8.41	42.18	7.87	−0.40	−1.72	0.09	−0.05
Me and My Feelings (MAMF)	10.62	5.19	10.45	5.07	−0.17	−1.22	0.22	−0.03
MAMF Emotional Difficulties	7.40	3.74	7.12	3.61	−0.28	−2.73	0.01	−0.08
MAMF Behavioural Difficulties	3.22	2.28	3.33	2.33	0.11	1.55	0.12	0.05
Student Resilience Survey	59.23	9.46	58.18	9.28	−1.05	−3.63	0.00	−0.11

Note: base = 997

These results are illustrated graphically in Figures 4 and 5.

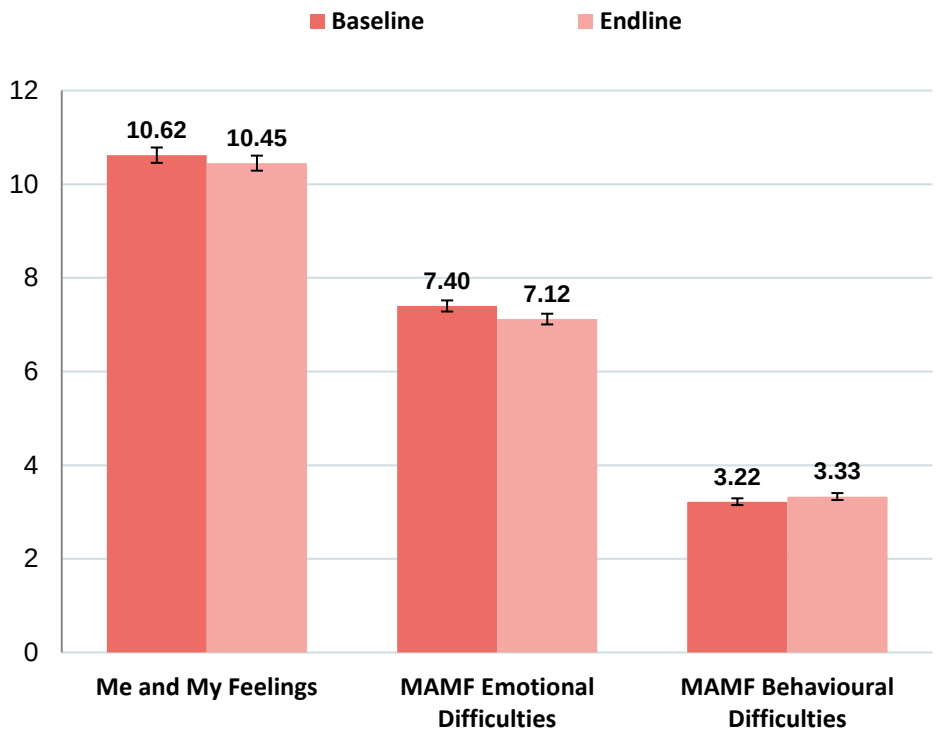
Figure 4. Comparison of mean SCWBS and SRS scores at baseline and endline



Note: base = 997

[39] The standardised mean difference is used as a summary statistic and expresses the size of the intervention effect. A large standardised mean difference indicates that there is a significant change (positive or negative) after the intervention. The use of a *standardised* mean difference (instead of a simple mean difference) ensures that the results are all in the same unit (i.e. standardised to a uniform scale), thus allowing for comparisons across different outcomes, scales and studies.

Figure 5. Comparison of mean MAMF scores at baseline and endline



Note: base = 997

In sum, looking at the whole cohort, there is little change between baseline and endline, and where we do find changes, the differences are small and not all in the expected direction. Therefore, these results do not support the success criteria of pupil pre-post data showing mean improvement in outcomes. However, we caution against drawing conclusions about the programme's impact, as the absence of a control group means we cannot determine the impact of the CRC Project. It is possible that treated individuals would have got worse without the intervention, which would show up in the outcomes for a control group.

Perceived outcomes

Qualitative findings bring together what participants said with the evaluator's interpretation. In contrast to the quantitative findings, participant accounts report changes in most of the dimensions covered by the surveys (resilience, positive outlook/well-being, behaviour and relationships). Specific perceived outcomes that align with the logic model include:

- increased resilience, including self-esteem and self-regulation;
- increased positive mental attitude, including to others and learning;
- increased awareness of their own behaviour, how they see themselves (their identity and how this is constructed);
- increased application of a growth mindset;
- increased ability to self-reflect;
- increased confidence to make better decisions;
- improved relationships with adults, teachers and peers;
- increased ability to understand others, including communication and empathy;
- increased ability to talk about difficult subjects and
- increased ability to show kindness and care to others.

The rest of this section discusses these perceived outcomes in more detail.

A key outcome mentioned by CRC champions, teachers, mentors and pupils was pupils having more **resilience** since taking part in the programme. This does not align with the outcome measures analysis, which found a small decrease in resilience. One example given of this was perseverance – for example, pupils being more likely to try again if something did not work the first time and less likely to get frustrated about the situation. Pupils commented on how they have become more resilient:

'I get stressed about my handwriting … I say to myself all the time, "Never give up". I still keep on trying'. **Pupil**

'I learnt that the most powerful word in the universe is yet ... because if you're saying, "Oh, I can't play football" … But if you use the word yet, "Oh, I can't play football yet"'. **Pupil**

The increased confidence also reported by participants (below) may indicate another element of resilience: greater self-esteem. This corresponds with mentors talking about the importance of building children's confidence in mentoring sessions.

A recurring theme from pupils, teachers and mentors was an increase in pupil **confidence**. Following the CRC Project, teachers reflected on pupils contributing more in class and attributed this to greater confidence. This was particularly noticed for those who participated in the targeted component. Mentors also reported this, as pupils were 'coming out of their shell' in mentoring sessions:

'[A]fter maybe the fifth session, [the teachers] were just like, "Yes, she's putting her hand up, she's giving answers, she's giving suggestions, she's now helping the teachers" … Almost night and day difference between what she was when we started the mentoring'. **Mentor**

Teachers and pupils did not offer reflections as to why the CRC Project led to greater confidence amongst pupils. However, mentors acknowledged the dynamic of the paired mentors may have been a contributing factor. They described how mentors could build relationships with different pupils, typically based on gender. For example, male pupils bonded more with the male mentor and female pupils with the female mentor. This enabled pupils to feel more comfortable and 'open up', as their mentor acted 'like a big brother or sister'.

Increased contributions in class or mentoring sessions might also be interpreted as evidence of other outcomes, such as a positive **attitude towards learning** or improved engagement in school life, a finding reinforced by pupils reporting that they wanted to read more as a result of the CRC Project and that they were listening when in school. These outcomes suggesting increased positive attitude and outlook mirror the small improvements in emotional outcomes found in the quantitative data but do not align with the finding that overall well-being did not change over time.

Indeed, CRC champions also observed improvements in **behaviour**, such as pupils being better able to have calmer and more respectful group discussions outside of Choices lessons. One example was a drama activity where pupils calmly and 'in an adult manner' debated amongst one another without getting frustrated and without needing the teacher to intervene. CRC champions attributed this to the culture of discussion and respect that Choices promotes. Furthermore, mentors reflected on teacher feedback regarding how, following mentoring sessions, disruptive pupils were better able to **regulate their behaviour**. Examples included pupils not disrupting others, following instructions and vocalising how they were feeling. Pupils

also reflected they had adopted more positive behaviours following the programme, such as being more sensible and being focused. These findings do not align with the quantitative data on behavioural difficulties, which showed no change.

Mentors and pupils noted in interviews that increased confidence and resilience enabled pupils to feel more sure of their **identity**. One mentor gave an example of a pupil who has many siblings and so felt they lacked an identity or sense of who they are. The mentor explained the pupil had been given a 'boost' from the CRC Project, which enabled the pupil to feel more positive and confident about who they are. Also, pupils reflected they have greater confidence in who they are and are more resilient to others influencing their identity. For example, one pupil described learning how 'it's good to defend yourself' and not to 'take other people's opinions so seriously'. Mentoring pupils attributed this directly to the mentors giving them greater assurances about who they are and teaching them they are more than they think they are. However, a contrasting view from pupils was that they did not have a stronger sense of identity following the CRC Project. In focus groups, pupils did not recognise the term identity and stated they did not feel better about themselves despite mentoring sessions.

CRC champions and pupils also talked about the '**growth mindset**' as an outcome. This approach encourages pupils to think more flexibly and positively. CRC Champions gave examples of pupils' application of the growth mindset, such as being calmer and more confident during their SATs compared to previous year groups. They perceived this to be due to Choices, as pupils had learnt to control negative thoughts and cope better with stress. Moreover, CRC Champions reported pupils who received the targeted component in both Years Five and Six showed particular improvements in their growth mindset. Pupils stated they had learnt about 'fixed and growth mindsets' but often used the phrases in interviews and focus groups without providing any further detail or explanation, meaning we cannot be sure how well they understood this concept.

CRC champions noted their pupils thinking about the **implications of decision-making** and noted that this was linked to pupils sharing similarities with characters in Kwan's Story (although they didn't provide any specific examples). Pupils themselves also reflected on the consequences of making choices. They commented on how bad choices will lead to getting in trouble and how bad consequences follow bad actions and good consequences follow good actions, specifically noting the example of when Hannah tells Kwan to steal his mother's credit card. Most notably, pupils also said they avoid bad situations, such as playing with someone else if people start fighting. However, another view from pupils was that they had adopted negative behaviours following the CRC Project, and teachers noted some pupils made bad decisions despite completing the programme. More details are given in the adverse and unintended consequences section.

Teachers, pupils and CRC champions reported **improved relationships between pupils** (echoing a similar perceived outcome for teachers). CRC champions and teachers discussed how different groups of pupils were now working and socialising with each other. They described how pupils were more respectful when talking to their peers and more understanding of different circumstances, such as classmates with single parents. Pupils acknowledged this too. They explained that, as they knew how Marcus felt about being bullied, they wanted to help their peers who were subject to bullying. They also reflected that while they knew people were different, they now know people have their own problems, too, suggesting a greater understanding of others. Pupils also talked about being kinder to classmates and siblings.

These findings suggest that pupils demonstrated empathy and had better communication and listening skills. Furthermore, as a result of the improved relationships between pupils, teachers and pupils thought

pupils' **social skills** had improved. Teachers acknowledged this has been important following COVID-19 and school closures, as pupils have had limited social interaction with their peers.

More evidence of increased communication skills was found in teachers and mentors reporting that the CRC Project had given pupils a **vocabulary to discuss difficult topics**. Mentors stated pupils were using this language in mentoring sessions, which showed pupils had learnt and internalised it (though they did not give examples of this).

These findings do not align with the quantitative evidence; peer relationships[40], communication and empathy were all domains of the SRS, for which scores decreased slightly over time.

Pupils talked about how the CRC Project enabled them to feel less anxious and **more prepared to transition to secondary school**. Although this is not an explicit outcome for the programme, it is part of the Choices session content and is an example of pupils applying the CRC Project learning to their lives. Pupils described how the programme showed them that their peers face the same concerns about transitioning to secondary school, and they can discuss these together. Mentoring pupils noted they felt less nervous about going to secondary school because their mentors had given them confidence that they would make friends at secondary school. Additionally, pupils explained how they used goal setting with their mentor to feel less nervous about transitioning to secondary school. These examples demonstrate how pupils applied knowledge from the programme to a current challenge they faced. However, a contrasting view from pupils was that the content of Choices portrayed secondary school in a negative and off-putting way:

'It makes me feel like I should be scared to go to secondary school because people are going to push you down and crack you'. **Pupil**

Variation between groups: introduction

We turn now to look at variations between different groups in terms of pupil outcomes. Using the pupil survey data, we examined the effectiveness of the intervention for different groups by conducting a pre-post analysis by different subgroups, comparing baseline scores, endline scores and pre-post changes in the various outcomes. It is crucial to note that any statistically significant result from the evidence of promise or subgroup analyses cannot be interpreted as a causal impact of the CRC, as the absence of a control group means we cannot determine impact.

This section also covers qualitative participants' reflections on variation between groups. When participants talked about variations in outcomes, the groups they mentioned did not necessarily match the subgroups included in the quantitative analysis. For this reason, some of the discussion in this section covers qualitative findings only, while for other subgroup comparisons, we draw on quantitative analysis only. Our findings cover the following:

- programme component (universal element only vs those who received the targeted component),
- gender,
- year group,

[40] We note that the survey items on peer relationships were framed in terms of how the respondent felt about their friends rather than having good relationships.

- attendance: pupils attending all 11 Choices sessions vs those who attended fewer than 11 sessions,
- additional needs and
- ethnicity.

Variation between groups: programme component (targeted and universal)

First, we compared pupils who received any form of targeted support (one-on-one and/or group mentoring) with those who only received the universal element (Choices). Results are reported in Table 13. We observe that across outcome measures, those receiving targeted support had significantly worse scores at baseline (lower well-being, lower resilience and greater emotional and behavioural difficulties) and that those differences were all large in magnitude. This reflects the fact that baseline scores were used to allocate targeted support.

Second, at endline, these differences between the targeted and universal groups all remain statistically significant but are all reduced in magnitude, suggesting that the two groups became more similar at endline (in other words, the gap between them remained but was reduced in size).

Lastly and relatedly, comparisons in pre-post changes suggest that for the targeted group, well-being and resilience increased, while emotional and behavioural difficulties decreased to a greater extent than for the universal group over the trial period. These differences are statistically significant and small to moderate in magnitude.

Table 13. Subgroup comparison of pre-post changes in outcomes based on the type of support received

	Difference at baseline			Difference at endline			Difference in pre-post change				
Outcome	Mean difference	p-value	Hedges' *g*	Mean difference	p-value	Hedges' *g*	Mean difference	p-value	Std mean difference	N1	N2
Stirling Child Wellbeing Scale	−13.48	0.00	−1.96	−7.99	0.00	−1.09	5.49	0.00	0.65	847	150
Me and My Feelings (MAMF)	5.78	0.00	1.21	3.93	0.00	0.81	−1.84	0.00	−0.36	847	150
MAMF Emotional Difficulties	3.67	0.00	1.05	2.37	0.00	0.67	−1.31	0.00	−0.35	847	150
MAMF Behavioural Difficulties	2.10	0.00	0.98	1.57	0.00	0.69	−0.54	0.01	−0.24	847	150
Student Resilience Survey	−10.67	0.00	−1.23	−7.98	0.00	−0.90	2.69	0.00	0.28	847	150

Note: The reference group (N1) is those receiving only universal support.

We also computed the pre-post change separately for those receiving universal and targeted support (the results are summarised in Table 14, and detailed results are in Appendix B in the Technical Appendix – Tables A1 and A2). We observe some improvement in outcomes for the targeted group, as well-being scores significantly increased, and overall MAMF and emotional difficulties scores significantly decreased between baseline and endline, with these differences being small to moderate. Pre-post changes in behavioural difficulties and resilience were not statistically significant.

However, for those receiving the universal component only, we observe that well-being and resilience scores actually decreased over the trial period. Behavioural difficulties also worsened, as scores significantly increased, with these differences being small in magnitude. One possible explanation for this is that the CRC programme activities may have initially increased awareness of various issues (with lowered scores as a result) and that it might take a longer time frame for the universal group to see improvements in scores. However, without comparing the programme participants with a control group that did not receive the intervention, we have no evidence to support this.

Table 14. Summary of pre-post changes for targeted and universal subgroups[41]

Type of programme component	Change between baseline and endline for each group		
	Stirling Child Wellbeing Scale	**Me and My Feelings**	**Student Resilience Survey**
Targeted	Significant increase in well-being score	Significant decrease in overall difficulties Significant decrease in emotional difficulties No significant change in behavioural difficulties	No significant change in resilience score
Universal only	Significant decrease in well-being score	No significant change in overall difficulties No significant change in emotional difficulties Significant increase in behavioural difficulties	Significant decrease in resilience score

Note: Improved outcomes are indicated in green text, and poorer outcomes are indicated in red text.

This initial subgroup comparison suggests that, on average, for those receiving the targeted component, outcomes generally improved, while for those receiving universal support only, outcomes remained stable or decreased. The CRC Project is specifically designed to give more support to targeted pupils, so this is a finding that might be thought to show some programme effect. However, in the absence of a control group, these findings may quite likely reflect regression to the mean. Those receiving targeted support were selected because they initially had poorer scores, and so we would expect these pupils' scores, on average, to move towards mean levels (improve) over time, regardless of participation in the programme. Meanwhile, those receiving universal support showed relatively high well-being and resilience and low emotional and behavioural difficulties at baseline, so we might expect these scores to worsen slightly or remain stable over time.

The evidence from the qualitative interviews aligns with the quantitative data about the targeted group, as in interviews, teachers reflected they had noticed a greater change in pupils who received the targeted component. For example, they noted that following mentoring sessions, quieter pupils were more confident, as they made greater contributions in class. Teachers perceived this to be a result of mentoring offering a 'personalised environment' which encouraged pupils to 'open up':

'I've got a lot of students who are quite confident, hands up all the time, so she was being drowned out by the hands, I guess. So having her in a more personalised environment was excellent. I think then she did open up, which was quite nice, so she was more vocal in class'. **Teacher**

Teachers also reflected that, for pupils with a difficult home life, mentoring provided much-needed focus and attention. In addition, mentors noted they saw a greater change in one-on-one mentoring pupils, as they were spending more time with just a single individual.

However, a contrasting view from CRC champions was that following the programme, all pupils, despite their different needs, achieved the same outcomes to some extent.

Variation between groups: gender

We explored differences in outcome trends for girls and boys (see Table 15)[42]. Baseline differences were generally small in magnitude, with girls reporting slightly higher emotional difficulties than boys (mean =

[41] For the detailed results this figure is based on, see Appendix B in the Technical Appendix (which shows the results for the pre-post change for those receiving universal and targeted support separately). The findings are shown in Tables A1 and A2.

[42] For simplicity, we compared those who stated 'I'm a girl' in both surveys with those who stated 'I'm a boy' in both surveys, excluding those who preferred not to state gender, described their gender in another way or chose different options at baseline and endline.

7.93 and 6.76, respectively) and lower behavioural difficulties (mean = 2.97 and 3.43 for girls and boys, respectively). Girls also had slightly higher MAMF scores overall than boys (mean = 10.90 and 10.19, respectively). These differences remained at endline and appear to have widened slightly in magnitude, while girls also began to show slightly worse well-being than boys at endline (mean = 41.78 and 42.73, respectively).

However, when looking at the magnitude of the pre-post change between boys and girls (and not baseline and endline scores separately), there were no significant differences. In other words, girls compared with boys did not respond differently to the programme. Therefore, there is no evidence that their outcomes changed differently over the course of the trial.

Table 15. Subgroup comparison of pre-post changes in outcomes based on gender

Outcome	Difference at baseline			Difference at endline			Difference in pre-post change			N1 (boys)	N2 (girls)
	Mean difference	p-value	Hedges' *g*	Mean difference	p-value	Hedges' *g*	Mean difference	p-value	Std mean difference		
Stirling Child Wellbeing Scale	−0.88	0.11	−0.10	−1.02	0.04	−0.13	−0.14	0.77	−0.02	466	490
Me and My Feelings (MAMF)	0.72	0.03	0.14	0.94	0.00	0.19	0.22	0.44	0.04	466	490
MAMF Emotional Difficulties	1.20	0.00	0.32	1.59	0.00	0.46	0.40	0.06	0.11	466	490
MAMF Behavioural Difficulties	−0.48	0.00	−0.21	−0.66	0.00	−0.29	−0.18	0.22	−0.08	466	490
Student Resilience Survey	0.30	0.62	0.03	0.57	0.34	0.06	0.27	0.64	0.03	466	490

Note: Reference group (N1) is boys.

In interviews, teachers had contrasting views on whether outcomes varied by gender. One view was that as a result of the programme, girls had become more confident and were 'finding their voice', evidenced by their greater contributions in class, whereas boys were less affected by the programme because, generally, they were already louder and more confident than girls. However, a contrasting view from teachers was that there were not any differences in outcomes between boys and girls.

Variation between groups: school year group

We compared results for Year Six and Year Five pupils (see Table 16). Year Six pupils showed lower well-being and resilience than Year Five pupils at baseline; both differences were significant but small in magnitude. These differences disappeared at endline.

In terms of differences in the magnitude of the pre-post change, we observe that both well-being and resilience increased to a greater extent for Year Six than Year Five pupils, although this difference was small in magnitude. Ultimately, the two groups became more similar in their outcomes between baseline and endline, perhaps providing further evidence of regression to the mean.

Table 16. Subgroup comparison of pre-post changes in outcomes based on year group

Outcome	Difference at baseline			Difference at endline			Difference in pre-post change			N1	N2
	Mean difference	p-value	Hedges' *g*	Mean difference	p-value	Hedges' *g*	Mean difference	p-value	Std mean difference		
Stirling Child Wellbeing Scale	−1.16	0.03	−0.14	0.26	0.60	0.03	1.42	0.00	0.17	504	493
Me and My Feelings (MAMF)	0.17	0.61	0.03	−0.28	0.38	−0.06	−0.45	0.12	−0.09	504	493
MAMF Emotional Difficulties	0.08	0.73	0.02	−0.27	0.24	−0.07	−0.35	0.09	−0.09	504	493
MAMF Behavioural Difficulties	0.08	0.57	0.04	−0.01	0.93	−0.01	−0.10	0.50	−0.04	504	493
Student Resilience Survey	−1.44	0.02	−0.15	−0.02	0.97	0.00	1.42	0.01	0.15	504	493

Note: Reference group (N1) is Year Five pupils.

Qualitative participants did not draw out differences in outcomes between pupils in different year groups. However, mentors noted that it was harder to engage Year Five pupils and reported a difference in maturity between Year Five and Year Six pupils (discussed in Evidence of feasibility – targeted component).

Variation between groups: attendance at Choices sessions

To examine differences by attendance, we compared those who attended all 11 Choices sessions with those who attended fewer than 11, observing that approximately two-thirds of pupils attended all sessions (see Table 17). Differences between these two groups of pupils were largely minimal and not statistically significant. One exception was that at baseline and endline, those who attended all 11 sessions reported significantly lower emotional difficulties. Qualitative participants did not mention session attendance as a relevant factor in interviews.

Table 17. Subgroup comparison of pre-post changes in outcomes based on whether pupils attended all 11 Choices sessions

Outcome	Difference at baseline			Difference at endline			Difference in pre-post change			N1	N2
	Mean difference	p-value	Hedges' *g*	Mean difference	p-value	Hedges' *g*	Mean difference	p-value	Std mean difference		
Stirling Child Wellbeing Scale	0.22	0.70	0.03	0.66	0.21	0.08	0.44	0.38	0.05	331	666
Me and My Feelings (MAMF)	−0.61	0.08	−0.12	−0.93	0.01	−0.18	−0.32	0.29	−0.06	331	666
MAMF Emotional Difficulties	−0.55	0.03	−0.15	−0.73	0.00	−0.20	−0.18	0.43	−0.05	331	666
MAMF Behavioural Difficulties	−0.06	0.72	−0.02	−0.20	0.20	−0.09	−0.14	0.34	−0.06	331	666
Student Resilience Survey	0.03	0.97	0.00	0.71	0.25	0.08	0.69	0.26	0.07	331	666

Note: Reference group (N1) is those who attended 10 sessions or fewer.

Variation between groups: pupils with additional challenges

In interviews, teachers and CRC champions noted pupils with additional challenges had particularly benefited from the CRC Project. For example, pupils who found it more challenging to develop friendships had begun mixing with other pupils, and pupils who found schoolwork difficult had started to ask for additional homework. We note that while participants mentioned pupils with SEND in terms of how sessions were delivered and group dynamics, they did not report any differences in outcomes for this subgroup.

We did not conduct a quantitative analysis for this subgroup of pupils; they were not identified as a subgroup of interest in the protocol or analysis plan, and they are not easily identifiable in the quantitative data.

Variation between groups: regression analysis and ethnicity

We performed regression analyses to further explore nuances in the outcome measures. This adds value to the existing subgroup analysis, as it enables us to explore differences based on one subgroup distinction while controlling for other factors (for example, looking at gender differences while controlling for ethnicity). It also goes beyond a single binary comparison (such as those presented above, for example, Year Five vs Year Six pupils) to explore cross-cutting variables with multiple categories (such as ethnicity[43]). We fitted separate regression models for each outcome, and the results are presented in Table 18. The clearest observation is that all outcome scores at endline are significantly and positively predicted by their respective baseline scores[44].

Results suggest that differences between ethnic groups in post-intervention outcomes were relatively minimal. A few differences did emerge. At endline, controlling for baseline scores and covariates, Black pupils and those from mixed/multiple ethnic backgrounds both reported lower resilience scores than Pakistani pupils. Those from mixed/multiple backgrounds also showed higher emotional difficulties than Pakistani pupils at endline. We caveat all findings around ethnicity due to inconsistencies in how survey data on ethnicity was collected and how these questions were answered by pupils (see the Methods section for more details).

To summarise, regression analysis suggests that endline outcome scores are strongly predicted by baseline outcome scores, such that higher well-being before the programme is associated with higher well-being after the programme, and so on. The exact coefficients can be used to inform power calculations in future trials. Regression analysis does not provide strong evidence for differences in outcomes based on ethnicity[45].

[43] We did not perform a simple binary subgroup analysis by ethnicity, as to do so would not be very meaningful given pupils' wide range of ethnic backgrounds (and as recommended by YEF). Instead, we report on differences by ethnicity (with multiple categories) later in this regression analysis section.

[44] Table A3, which includes standard errors for each cell, is included in Appendix B in the Technical Appendix.

[45] The pre-post correlation of the outcome scores in the regression will help inform decisions on sample sizes (e.g. through power calculations) for potential future efficacy trials of the CRC (see the Conclusions chapter for more details).

Table 18. Regression of endline outcome scores on baseline outcome scores and covariates

	(1) SCWBS (endline)	(2) MAMF (endline)	(3) MAMF Behavioural Difficulties (endline)	(4) MAMF Emotional Difficulties (endline)	(5) SRS (endline)
SCWBS baseline	0.53***				
MAMF baseline		0.57***			
MAMF Behavioural Difficulties baseline			0.50***		
MAMF Emotional Difficulties baseline				0.54***	
SRS baseline					0.48***
Component					
Receives targeted component	−0.73	0.53	0.52**	0.23	−2.71***
Attendance					
Number of Choices sessions attended (4-11)	0.31	−0.10	−0.05	−0.05	0.24
Attends all 11 Choices sessions	−0.13	−0.38	−0.08	−0.31	0.12
Year group					
Year Six	0.83**	−0.28	0.03	−0.30	0.62
Gender					
I'm a girl	−0.59	0.56*	−0.42***	0.98***	0.47
Gender different at baseline/endline	−0.50	0.23	−0.14	0.39	0.24
Ethnicity					
Arab	−0.85	−0.08	0.28	−0.31	−1.71
Bangladeshi	0.82	−0.01	−0.19	0.18	−1.18
Indian	0.05	0.93	0.63	0.30	−1.86
Black	0.17	−0.02	−0.04	−0.01	−3.42**
White	−0.14	0.61	0.23	0.40	−1.70*
Mixed/multiple	−1.58*	1.31*	0.13	1.27***	−2.88**
Other	0.70	0.20	−0.09	0.31	−0.31
Ethnicity different at baseline/endline	−0.06	0.72**	0.38**	0.35	−1.02
Constant	16.34***	5.14**	2.29**	3.23**	28.36***
Observations	997	997	997	997	997
R-squared	0.36	0.39	0.31	0.39	0.30

*** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p < 0.1

Reference groups: For receives targeted component the reference group is receives universal component only; for Attendanceit is "attends 10 or fewer"; for Year Groupit is "Year Five", for Gender it is 'I'm a boy' and for Ethnicity the reference group is "Pakistani"

Cells suppressed due to low counts (n < 10): gender 'other' and 'prefer not to say'; ethnicity 'prefer not to say'.

We followed up on these findings by performing pairwise comparisons between all categories of ethnic background, i.e. 45 pairwise comparisons for each of the five outcomes. All but four of these pairwise comparisons were overwhelmingly non-significant, even before controlling for multiple hypothesis testing, and so we conclude that such ethnic differences in survey outcome trends are likely minimal.

Unintended consequences for pupils

RQ: Are there any adverse or unintended consequences?

Increased pupil academic attainment was identified in the logic model as a (positive) unintended consequence of the CRC Project, and this was reported by both pupils and CRC champions. CRC champions

noted their school's SATs results had improved. They attributed this to the CRC Project, as pupils were less nervous during the exams and had more of a positive mindset when compared to previous cohorts of pupils. Furthermore, pupils explained their maths scores had improved due to the CRC Project. We did not collect quantitative data on attainment, so we cannot triangulate these findings.

Instances of adverse consequences were uncommon, with many participants unable to identify any for the programme. However, where teachers and CRC champions recognised adverse consequences, they related to two main aspects:

- Some Choices pupils adopted **negative behaviours**, ranging from accessing inappropriate content online to pupils mocking each other for contributions made in Choices lessons. Teachers reflected that these instances may not be a direct result of the Choices programme, but they felt disappointed pupils had acted this way despite participating in the programme. Moreover, some pupils reflected that either their behaviour had not changed or it had deteriorated, as they wanted to behave in the same way Marcus behaves. Whilst it is important to acknowledge these comments, often they were made in a joking or insincere way. This could suggest pupils were not answering truthfully and were instead reacting to the group dynamic.

- For both the targeted and universal elements, pupils had **missed other lessons or curriculum content** to complete the CRC Project. Schools responded to this by moving core curriculum subjects, like Maths, to avoid mentoring pupils missing lessons or by shortening other subjects, like humanities, to enable the delivery of Choices lessons. CRC champions reflected that despite the importance of the CRC Project, it may have been to the detriment of other subjects:

  'It's well worth it, but then you've just got to consider what you're leaving out of your existing curriculum to make sure that you can fit it in'. **Champion**

CRC champions acknowledged pupils missing curriculum content to complete extra interventions was standard practice and not unique to the CRC Project.

Conclusions on pupil outcomes

In conclusion, we find some evidence of promise in terms of pupil outcomes, which comes primarily from the qualitative findings.

The analysis of quantitative outcome measures shows limited changes. For the cohort as a whole, there is little change between baseline and endline outcomes, and where we do find changes, the differences are small. When looking at variation between groups, the most striking difference in pre-post changes is between pupils who received the targeted component versus those who received only the universal element. We see that targeted pupils generally had poorer outcomes at baseline (hence their selection for the targeted component). These gaps narrowed over the course of the intervention, as targeted pupils experienced greater improvements in their outcomes than non-targeted pupils. However, these differences may, at least in part, be a result of regression to the mean. We note that the greater progress for targeted pupils was also echoed in qualitative accounts. Overall, we caution against drawing conclusions about the programme's impact, as the absence of a control group means we cannot determine the impact of the CRC Project.

In contrast, qualitative participants reported a range of pupil outcomes that aligned with the key dimensions featured in the logic model. When participants did not explicitly mention logic model outcomes, evidence

can be inferred from their accounts. For example, teachers talked about pupils' improved behaviour, which we can infer may be due to pupils having better self-regulation; similarly, pupils' greater confidence around speaking in class may be due to improved self-esteem and/or an improved attitude to learning and/or engagement in school life.

In addition to the intended outcomes, there were also some positive unintended consequences of the CRC Project, primarily around secondary school transition and positive academic attainment. However, the qualitative data also revealed contrasting views: that there were adverse outcomes (such as poor behaviour or decision-making) and no clear outcomes for pupils.

There were some logic model outcomes that were not identifiable in participant accounts. These primarily related to how pupils perceive relationships with others and their awareness of what appropriate relationships look like.

Outcomes for mentors, teachers and schools

RQ: What changes, if any, are made to teacher and mentor practice and school support for children at risk of becoming vulnerable to criminal exploitation as a result of the programme?

In qualitative interviews, participants had a range of views about whether changes for staff and schools had resulted from the programme. We do not quantify findings from qualitative data but present the range of views captured. One view from teachers, CRC champions and mentors was that several outcomes could be identified for themselves and their schools. This section covers these outcomes in relation to the intended outcomes in the logic model. This view, however, was not universal; a contrasting view from CRC champions and teachers was that they were not aware of any outcomes for themselves or their school. One reason for this was that school staff perceived the CRC Project to be pupil focused and so had not reflected on what the programme meant for themselves or their schools[46].

Improved mentoring practice

Mentors noted improvements in their own **mentoring practice** in terms of work with children and young people. For example, mentors described being more confident when working with pupils and feeling more able to be themselves rather than adopting a teacher-style role.

Some changes were attributed specifically to experiences working with pupils with different needs (such as SEND or behavioural issues). Mentors reflected that this experience had given them opportunities to adapt their approach for these pupils, which in turn had improved their agility as mentors and sharpened their skill set:

'[Mentoring different pupils] helps you to more fine-tune your trade because you're not in the same place all the time where you can become complacent … you've got a different class every single day with different students. I think that there helps you to grow as a mentor'. **Mentor**

[46] In line with the protocol, we did not collect quantitative data on outcomes for schools, teachers and mentors.

Teacher and school outcomes

CRC champions and teachers who were able to give examples of the effect of the programme on themselves and their schools identified a number of outcomes that align with the logic model. These fell under two broad themes: improved ability to discuss difficult topics and improved understanding of pupils.

Discussing difficult topics

A key theme in interviews with CRC champions and teachers was that it had become easier to discuss difficult topics with pupils. As a consequence of Choices, pupils were more open about their judgements and opinions, which allowed the teacher to challenge misconceptions. Teachers and CRC champions also reflected that greater openness amongst pupils was a reason why it had become easier to discuss difficult topics:

'As a teacher, it's been fabulous because, actually, we've been able to go just so much deeper into the thought process that we wouldn't have been able to do before'. **Teacher and champion**

CRC champions and teachers recognised the story element of Choices as being key to facilitating how teachers approached topics. CRC champions noted this particularly supported teachers who felt uncomfortable or uneasy with the subject matter. Therefore, CRC champions hoped these teachers now had greater confidence to discuss difficult topics like the ones raised in Choices stories.

Moreover, CRC champions noted the Choices programme had supported teachers' delivery of PSHE and relationship and health education (RHE) lessons, as it provided them with a vocabulary for challenging topics (such as racism, sexism and protected characteristics). CRC champions acknowledged this vocabulary helped teachers facilitate conversations and discussions in PSHE lessons, including conversations around internet use, social media and e-safety. They also reflected that Choices had given teachers greater confidence when teaching PSHE and relationship and sex education (RSE).

Better understanding of pupils and improved relationships

Participants identified a number of outcomes for both teachers and schools in terms of teachers having a better understanding of their pupils, leading to improved relationships. CRC champions and teachers gave a variety of reasons for this change. One was related to the fact that Choices had resulted in pupils being more open and articulate about their concerns, allowing teachers to get to know their pupils better:

'You really get to see what kind of issues they're facing and if you can create the right kind of environment where they feel like it is a bit separate from the classroom'. **Teacher**

Teachers and CRC champions also reflected how the Postcode to the Globe selection process had broadened their outlook and improved understanding of which pupils might be in need of additional support. They stated that, as the programme can identify quieter pupils for the targeted component, it has tested the school's thinking, as, historically, these pupils would not have been recognised as necessarily needing additional support. Additionally, teachers acknowledged that the identification process might be useful for new teachers when identifying pupils in need of additional support:

'It challenged my thinking about some of the quieter children that we don't oversee, but sometimes we can't get to … because it just changed my outlook on the grouping of those children and who needs that support'. **Champion**

Additionally, teachers attributed their improved understanding to the feedback received from mentors, as teachers could then follow up with pupils in one-on-one discussions about concerns raised by mentors (such as bullying).

As a consequence of this improved understanding of pupils, teachers and CRC champions said their relationships with pupils had improved. Teachers acknowledged the improved relationships with pupils had made it more enjoyable to teach them and also found it was easier to resolve playground disputes.

The research question asks whether there were improvements in support for children at risk of criminal exploitation, though none of the outcomes for teachers and schools in the logic model explicitly link with this aim. The improved identification of children needing support may be part of this ambition (though reasons pupils were identified for support were varied and not about vulnerability to exploitation per se). There was little evidence in our findings that school staff related these teacher and school outcomes to the wider aim of supporting children at risk of criminal exploitation.

Unintended outcomes for mentors, teachers and schools

Mentors identified two positive outcomes for themselves that were not part of the logic model:

- They have started teaching the content from the CRC Project at home with their own children, particularly resilience strategies.
- They felt happier and more positive following mentoring sessions due to the feedback they had received from both pupils and teachers.

School staff reported that teachers and schools have also seen unintended positive outcomes that they attribute to the CRC Project. First, schools have directly applied learnings from the CRC Project to other lessons and school initiatives. Some examples include:

- using ground rules in other lessons;
- referring to Choices content when pupils make wrong decisions, for example, reaffirming individual choices affect others;
- integrating Choices messages in school expectations and the school ethos and
- establishing a 'Peer Buddies' scheme: pupils who have completed the Choices component are buddies with younger pupils in the school.

Second, the CRC Project has contributed to increased pastoral support in schools. Teachers noted that mentors increased schools' capacity to deliver pastoral support and reflected that this was beneficial for both pupils and school staff.

Conclusions on mentor, teacher and school outcomes

Overall, the evidence on mentor, teacher and school outcomes indicates progress towards a number of logic model outcomes. Despite this, a contrasting view from participants was that they were not able to identify outcomes for teachers, mentors or their schools and saw the programme as focused on pupil outcomes (such as increased resilience).

For mentors, the perception of improved mentoring skills can be seen as evidence of progress towards several related logic model outcomes, though the specific outcomes were not explicitly discussed. This includes:

- increased ability to create a positive environment,
- increased ability to manage challenging behaviour,
- increased ability to 'think on their feet' and be flexible,
- increased listening skills and
- increased ability to build trusted relationships.

Logic model outcomes for mentors that were not reported by participants were related to the CRC Project, such as an increased understanding of mentoring as an intervention and an increased ability to work in schools and manage communications with school staff.

The perceived outcomes for teachers and schools closely match the intended outcomes in the logic model, including:

- improved ability to facilitate CYP discussions,
- increased ability to manage difficult conversations,
- improved relationships with CYP,
- schools being better able to identify children in need of additional support and
- enhanced delivery of PSHE and RSE curricula.

Logic model outcomes that did not feature in participant accounts primarily relate to increased capability for teachers to plan Choices lessons and safeguarding processes.

In addition, participants had limited reflections on the CRC Project 'impact' of reducing the risk of vulnerability to crime and violence. While this is not an outcome that would be expected within the time frame of the evaluation, it is interesting to note that teachers and CRC champions did not feel able to comment on this, and one view was that they did not perceive their pupils to be at risk of involvement in crime.

Readiness for trial

This chapter starts with an assessment of the success criteria for the study, then presents the evidence for four research questions on readiness for trial (refinements to the logic model, delivery optimisation, scalability and outcome suitability). Drawing on all of these elements, we then give our judgement on the intervention's readiness for trial, along with recommendations and considerations for the design of a potential future evaluation.

Success criteria

The aim of the pilot evaluation was to explore evidence of feasibility and evidence of promise and assess readiness for trial. In order to achieve these aims, the pilot would need to meet a number of success criteria (listed in the Methods chapter).

In this section, we set out our assessment of each of the success criteria in turn, outlining the key findings or data that our judgement is based on. As YEF notes, failure to meet success criteria does not necessarily mean that the main evaluation should be abandoned but will suggest that the proposed design and methods require revision.

Outcome measures show low attrition (e.g. at least 80% complete data at the endpoint)

We do not have the information needed to calculate attrition in full (i.e. taking into account attrition at different stages of data collection and preparation). The success criteria refer to the proportion that completed the endline survey, which for this study was just under target at around 79%. However, many of those cases were dropped from the final dataset (see Table 8 in the Methods chapter), which contained 997 cases out of a possible 1,653 (estimated) total, equating to just c.60% of the whole cohort. Overall, in our view, there were many factors which reduced the final sample size (set out in full in the Methods chapter) and would be important to minimise in any potential future study.

There are no systematic issues with missing item data

There were a number of issues with data for individual items, though this was related to data quality rather than missing data:

- We anticipated missing item data in the outcome measures when the evaluation was designed, with plans to mitigate this depending on the scale of the problem. In fact, the scales were administered in an online survey tool, with each question being mandatory, resulting in no item non-response. While this may appear beneficial, it raises some questions about data quality. When a respondent is 'forced' to give an answer, this can be counterproductive and affect data quality, as their response may not be a 'true' or 'valid' response (due to wishing to conceal the true answer or due to not having a clear or definite response to give). It can also be considered unethical to insist that participants respond to questions they may feel uncomfortable with, especially around potentially sensitive subjects such as well-being. The scales used in this pilot would implicitly allow item non-response if they were administered on paper, even if an explicit 'Refuse' or 'Skip' code was not offered.
- Pupil characteristics such as gender and ethnicity were collected by pupil self-report rather than collected from schools as part of the administrative data. This resulted in a high number of cases

with mismatched data between baseline and endline. This contributed to a lower sample size for the analysis and raised concerns about data quality.

- Data for two administrative variables (UPN and opt-out status) were missing for a small number of cases (less than 10).

Pupil pre-post survey data show mean improvement (e.g. improved well-being, reduced emotional and behavioural difficulties, increased resilience)

As we set out in the Outcomes chapter, overall pupil pre-post survey data shows limited changes. Levels of well-being and overall emotional and behavioural difficulties did not change significantly from baseline to endline. Scores for the emotional difficulties subscale decreased significantly over the trial period, but this decrease was small. Meanwhile, average levels of resilience decreased significantly (success would be indicated by increased scores) between baseline and endline, although, again, the change was small.

Therefore, results for the whole cohort do not support the success criteria of pupil pre-post data showing mean improvement in outcomes. However, without a control group, we caution against drawing conclusions about the programme's impact and note that YEF's guidance for new pilots recommends avoiding this type of analysis given the challenges of interpreting the results. In addition, we would also caution against drawing conclusions based on outcomes where change was detected (e.g. boys vs girls, targeted vs universal delivery), as this will likely be an overestimate of efficacy. More evidence is needed to be able to assess whether those differences are due to the programme or not.

Selected outcomes measures are internally valid

We conducted a psychometric analysis to assess internal validity as determined by Cronbach's α and McDonald's ω (Flora, 2020) in accordance with the study protocol. Table 19 displays Cronbach's α and McDonald's ω statistics for each outcome measure and MAMF subscales at baseline and endline separately. Scores of 0.70 and above can be considered good, 0.80 and above better and 0.90+ as ideal (Ravinder and Saraswathi, 2020).

Results suggest strong internal validity for all measures at both time points.

Table 19. Psychometric properties of outcome measures

Variable	McDonald's ω		Cronbach's α		No. of items
	Baseline	Endline	Baseline	Endline	
Stirling Child Wellbeing Scale	0.89	0.88	0.89	0.88	12
Me and My Feelings (MAMF)	0.84	0.83	0.84	0.83	16
MAMF Emotional Difficulties	0.81	0.79	0.80	0.78	10
MAMF Behavioural Difficulties	0.77	0.77	0.76	0.77	6
Student Resilience Survey	0.85	0.85	0.85	0.85	15

Note: Base = 997

Selected outcome measures correlate with each other in the expected direction, e.g. resilience is negatively correlated with emotional and behavioural difficulties

We conducted a descriptive analysis of outcome measures to explore correlations between outcomes. Tables 20 and 21 display these results at baseline and endline, respectively. These tables contain average outcome scores (mean) and variation in scores (standard deviation). Other cells display intercorrelations between scores. For instance, the intersection of the cell '1. Stirling Child Wellbeing Scale' and '5' displays the correlation between well-being scores (SCWBS) and resilience (SRS). Positive values indicate positive correlations, and negative values indicate negative correlations.

All outcomes are significantly correlated with one another, both at baseline (see Table 20) and endline (see Table 21). These correlations all fall in the expected directions. For example, looking at the intersection between cells '1. Stirling Child Wellbeing Scale' and '5', we see that there was a moderate positive correlation between well-being and resilience scores; pupils with higher well-being were also more resilient. Furthermore, there were moderate negative correlations between well-being and emotional and behavioural difficulties (MAMF overall scores and subscales). Pupils with better well-being experienced less severe emotional and behavioural difficulties. Similarly, more resilient pupils also experienced fewer emotional and behavioural difficulties, according to MAMF scores. MAMF subscales correlated strongly and positively with overall MAMF scores but only moderately with each other, indicating that they indeed measure separate constructs.

Table 20. Outcome descriptives and intercorrelations at baseline

Outcome	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. Stirling Child Wellbeing Scale	42.58	8.41	1.00	−0.62	−0.56	−0.49	0.68
2. Me and My Feelings (MAMF)	10.62	5.19	−0.62	1.00	0.92	0.76	−0.50
3. MAMF Emotional Difficulties	7.40	3.74	−0.56	0.92	1.00	0.45	−0.44
4. MAMF Behavioural Difficulties	3.22	2.28	−0.49	0.76	0.45	1.00	−0.42
5. Student Resilience Survey	59.23	9.46	0.68	−0.50	−0.44	−0.42	1.00

Note: Base = 997; all correlations are significant at $p < 0.001$ (2-tailed); positive values indicate positive correlations, and negative values indicate negative correlations; columns 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 refer to their respective numbered outcomes.

Table 21. Outcome descriptives and intercorrelations at endline

Outcome	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. Stirling Child Wellbeing Scale	42.18	7.87	1.00	−0.59	−0.50	−0.50	0.71
2. Me and My Feelings	10.45	5.07	−0.59	1.00	0.91	0.77	−0.46
3. MAMF Emotional Difficulties	7.12	3.61	−0.50	0.91	1.00	0.43	−0.37
4. MAMF Behavioural Difficulties	3.33	2.33	−0.50	0.77	0.43	1.00	−0.42
5. Student Resilience Survey	58.18	9.28	0.71	−0.46	−0.37	−0.42	1.00

Note: Base = 997; all correlations are significant at $p < 0.001$ (2-tailed); positive values indicate positive correlations, and negative values indicate negative correlations; columns 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 refer to their respective numbered outcomes

Evidence gathered corroborated with the logic model under these terms:

- **All evaluation schools implemented the CRC Project in full, with delivery across schools sufficiently consistent, e.g. number of lessons, topics covered and format used.**
- **Qualitative data suggests the intervention is acceptable and engaging across delivery staff and children; there is perceived progress towards the short-term outcomes for children, teachers and mentors.**

Consistency of delivery

Overall, the CRC Project was delivered largely as intended for both components of the intervention. However, the delivery of mentoring was more varied, with some inconsistencies between schools.

For the Choices sessions, teachers and CRC champions reported that all lessons in Year Five and Year Six had been delivered. On average, pupils in the sample attended 95% of Choices sessions, while two-thirds (67%) of pupils attended all lessons. Lessons were typically delivered once a week and intended to last 60 minutes but varied between 40 and 90 minutes.

Year Five and Year Six pupils from all evaluation schools took part in mentoring, and mentors reported sessions lasted one hour as intended (while pupils were less sure). The programme achieved the target of at least 10% of pupils receiving targeted support through mentoring (both for the cohort as a whole and for each school), though there were wide variations in the proportions selected. Meanwhile, the target of 20% of the targeted group receiving one-on-one mentoring was only met at the overall level[47] and not at the school level, as our dataset showed that in three schools, there were no one-on-one mentoring pupils (evidence from qualitative interviews reveals that one school did not have Year Six one-on-one mentoring due to COVID-19 disruption and catch-up). Attendance data also suggests that some one-on-one pupils did not receive group mentoring.

Meanwhile, attendance data suggests a mixed picture for the number of mentoring sessions *delivered*, especially for one-on-one mentoring (though the small sample for this group means results should be treated with caution), with between one and eight possible sessions in evaluation schools (this is not in line with the intended model of four sessions). Around two-thirds (63%) of pupils *attended* all possible group mentoring sessions, while among the 20 pupils who received one-on-one mentoring, three-quarters (75%) attended all possible one-on-one mentoring sessions[48]. Pupils' average attendance was 3.75 sessions (94% of possible sessions).

Choices sessions were generally delivered consistently across schools. Adaptations and differences across schools primarily related to the resources (slides) and the amount of content in each session. For example, teachers reported reducing the content of each lesson plan, as it did not fit into the one-hour slot. Because of this, schools did not always deliver all Choices content, and, therefore, different content may have been delivered across schools. Teachers were unclear about whether they were required to adapt slides and if this was part of the intended delivery model. This also led to tension between the delivery of the content and the time for in-depth exploration of topics.

Mentors' accounts suggest that key elements of the mentoring sessions were delivered as intended. For instance, the delivery of sessions was flexible and adaptable, involving different tasks, discussions and activities. This was part of the planned approach to mentoring. While the content of mentoring differed within and across schools, sessions consistently reflected the aims of the CRC Project, such as building self-confidence and a growth mindset for pupils. However, as evaluators, we note that there is little detail on mentoring delivery in the logic model or the other project documents that we received, meaning that it is difficult to assess the consistency and fidelity of this element.

Qualitative evidence on responsiveness and acceptability

Training and support were acceptable and well-received by teachers, CRC champions and mentors. Teachers noted that they preferred in-person training compared to online training. That said, online training was primarily used because of COVID-19 disruption.

[47] Based on the figures in the evaluation sample, only 13% of the targeted group received one-on-one mentoring. However, this figure is lower than expected, as the targeted group as a whole was larger than the CRC target. If we recalculate based on the original target of 10% receiving the targeted component, the target of 20% for one-on-one mentoring is met. The full figures are given in the Evidence of feasibility: targeted component chapter.

[48] Due to the wide range in the number of sessions available at different schools, statistics on pupil attendance are calculated on the basis of 'available' sessions for that pupil (derived from attendance data) rather than the intended number of sessions.

Choices stories and topics were generally acceptable and engaging to both teachers and pupils. There was some discomfort around the topic of internet grooming, but this was overcome through a dedicated training segment around this theme. Pupils particularly enjoyed the practical activities and suggested they would like more of these; however, this would not be possible with the current focus on written activities.

Pupil selection for group and one-on-one mentoring was viewed as largely acceptable, with pupils and mentors agreeing that the right pupils were chosen. However, more effective communication between CRC champions, pupils and parents about what mentoring was would have been beneficial for reducing parent or pupil anxiety prior to joining the sessions.

Overall, the content, topics and activities covered during mentoring were acceptable and engaging to mentors and pupils. However, participants suggested that pupils with SEND found engaging more challenging. CRC champions and teachers felt their knowledge of mentoring was too limited and wanted more awareness of what the sessions entailed. This could also help CRC champions to better communicate the aims and content of mentoring to pupils and parents.

Qualitative evidence on perceived progress towards short-term outcomes for children, teachers and mentors

The qualitative analysis found a wide range of views about pupil outcomes. One view (from mentors, CRC champions and teachers) was that they were not able to identify any changes in pupil outcomes. In contrast, another view (from all groups of participants) was that there had been a number of changes for pupils, most notably increased confidence in class, greater resilience, a 'growth mindset' and improved relationships with others due to greater empathy, understanding and self-regulation. These outcomes broadly align with the logic model, though they do not necessarily match the model's categorisation of outcomes as short, medium and long term. Teachers noticed a greater change in pupils who received the targeted component than the universal element alone (which reflects the quantitative findings). For example, they noted that following mentoring sessions, quieter pupils were more confident, as they made greater contributions in class. Mentors also noted they saw a greater change in one-on-one mentoring pupils, which they attributed to them receiving more individual attention.

Teachers, CRC champions and mentors were not always able to identify outcomes for themselves. However, several outcomes of the CRC Project were reported for themselves and for schools. Many of the outcomes for teachers and schools align with the logic model, including improved ability to facilitate CYP discussions and manage difficult conversations; improved relationships with pupils; schools being better able to identify children in need of additional support; and enhanced delivery of PSHE and RSE curriculum.

There were some logic model outcomes which did not feature in participant accounts. These primarily related to the increased capability for teachers to plan Choices lessons and safeguarding processes.

Mentors also noted changes, namely improvements to their mentoring abilities and their practice with CYP with different needs.

Logic model refinement

RQ: What changes, if any, are needed to the intervention logic model?

Based on our findings, we recommend two areas for potential refinement of the logic model in order to increase the model's clarity, focus and specificity. In our view, these changes would be beneficial for the CRC

Project as a whole and would aid consistent scale-up, as implementers would have a better understanding of a) the key programme activities and content and b) how the programme activities translate into intrinsic and extrinsic outcomes and the project's overall impact. The refinements would also benefit any future evaluation by giving greater clarity about key outcomes and helping to define what should be measured, for whom and when.

More accurately describing the programme components

Our first set of recommendations are changes to ensure the model accurately describes programme delivery and aligns with participant accounts:

- Update the section on training activities for teachers and include training activities for mentors to reflect changes made to the training offer following the feasibility stage.
- Include details on the time frame that mentoring is delivered over as has been done for the Choices sessions.
- Include details on key session content and activities that all recipients receive (for Choices and mentoring) in addition to dosage.
- Linked to this, consider adding change mechanisms or assumptions about *how* and *why* outcomes develop during Choices and mentoring sessions. These change mechanisms can be seen as an indicator of quality and can aid consistency of delivery.

We note that the logic model description of the intervention includes details on teacher training and resources but does not have equivalent information for mentor training and resources.

In addition, the universal and targeted components are described in terms of session dosage, but there is no information about key content or activities. It can be particularly valuable to capture this information for a targeted component like mentoring, where the nature of the intervention is that it is tailored to recipient needs, but there are still core elements which will be delivered consistently across recipients and schools. Without these details, it is challenging to assess whether the programme has been delivered in line with the logic model.

We observe that participant accounts attributed successful project implementation to key aspects of delivery or content. One example is pupils feeling that mentoring sessions are a safe space. Reflecting these in the logic model (for example, as 'change mechanisms' or assumptions) can highlight what distinguishes the project from other school activities and can be seen as 'quality' indicators. If these elements are shown to be present (for example, through an IPE), this would help to evidence the CRC Project's programme theory. These details also aid consistent delivery when a project is scaled up. This work would also give an opportunity to review whether there are different outcomes (and change mechanisms) for the universal and targeted components. The logic model was created some time ago, and thinking may have evolved since then in terms of the extent to which the two components are viewed as integrated and whether they lead to the same or different outcomes[49].

[49] We note that another NatCen study for YEF on LNK Educate (report forthcoming) has a logic model which indicates different outcomes for the universal and targeted groups.

Increasing the clarity and specificity of outcomes

A second set of recommendations are proposed in order to improve the theoretical underpinning of the model by refining outcomes:

- Review pupil outcomes in the logic model with the aim of reducing the overall number. Outcomes that help differentiate this programme versus 'business as usual' are particularly valuable. The identification of a small number of primary and secondary outcomes is a common approach in efficacy trials, as it allows a focus on measuring progress towards the key programme outcomes. As part of this review, consider making links between intrinsic and extrinsic outcomes/project impact more explicit.
- Review the assignment of pupil outcomes to short-, medium-, or long-term categories. Our findings suggest that the theoretical sequential process underpinning outcome development may not always match the experience of programme participants or implementers. One consideration is whether some of the 'short-term' and 'medium-term' outcomes might be conceptualised as change mechanisms rather than outcomes per se (i.e. changes that are required to achieve key outcomes). In addition, we recommend specifying the length of the different time phases for pupil outcomes (short, medium and long term) so that a future evaluation is clear about which outcomes can be assessed in a particular time frame.
- Review unintended outcomes for pupils; in particular, consider adding a positive attitude towards the transition to secondary school as an intended/unintended outcome.
- Review the intended outcomes for all groups, and consider whether these are important in terms of the programme achieving its goals (some of the outcomes for implementers and schools might be understood as enablers or assumptions that are required in order for the programme to be delivered). If not, they could be removed.

This pilot study provides evidence of the extent to which there is progress towards the logic model outcomes. In interviews, views on outcomes for teachers, schools and mentors were varied (see Evidence of promise). Some logic model outcomes were perceived, such as teachers' increased ability to facilitate CYP discussions and manage difficult conversations and improvements to mentors' abilities. However, CRC champions and teachers were not always able to identify changes or outcomes for themselves or their schools, viewing the intervention as primarily focused on pupils.

The pupil outcomes reported by participants broadly reflected the logic model, with increased confidence and resilience, greater self-regulation and improved relationships all echoing logic model outcomes. However, we note that the perceived outcomes did not all neatly align with the logic model, particularly in terms of how specific outcomes were described and the logic model time frames.

The outcomes in the logic model are predominantly intrinsic – relating to internal changes or processes – such as 'increased self-esteem'. These are important, as the theory is that improvements in these outcomes will help protect children from future victimisation or exploitation. However, the logic model does not detail *how* the project activities lead to these intrinsic outcomes, how the latter underpin changes in behaviour or how project outcomes ultimately achieve the impact of 'reduced likelihood of involvement in youth crime'.

Conceptualising how attitudinal or psychological changes lead to behavioural change is not always clear-cut. For example, while teachers describe speaking up in class as evidence of greater confidence, another perspective might see this behaviour as due to increased engagement in school life (a different logic model

outcome). As links between intrinsic and behavioural outcomes are not included in the logic model, they require some interpretation. We recommend making these links explicit and, where possible, adding further extrinsic outcomes (where they align with the programme) – those that are more easily observed – to make the process towards the project's long-term outcomes and impact clearer and more measurable[50].

As evaluators, we note that long-term pupil outcomes (and project impact) were unlikely to be observed by qualitative participants, as our fieldwork was conducted alongside or soon after the intervention was completed (with implementers having limited post-programme contact with pupils). Despite this, some of the pupil outcomes perceived by participants were those identified as 'long term' in the logic model, including an increase in 'growth mindset' and increased resilience. This suggests the phasing of outcomes from the short term to the longer term does not necessarily match participants' experiences.

One factor that may help explain both of these discontinuities is that a number of logic model outcomes for pupils are not exclusively project-specific. For example, confidence, resilience and growth mindsets are all familiar concepts in primary school teaching. Indeed, group mentoring pupils alluded to finding this overlap with PSHE topics repetitive, saying, 'W*e've learned about resilience so many times*'. We also know that one reason schools signed up for the CRC Project was due to a good 'fit' with existing priorities (one school was already '*encouraging independence, resilience*' (full quote in Evidence of feasibility – Programme context). This may be one explanation for participants not being able to ascribe changes to the programme. It may also help to explain why outcomes were perceived in a shorter time frame than suggested in the logic model.

Finally, participants stressed the positive impact the programme had on pupils' feelings and anxiety about secondary school transition. This could be added to the logic model, either as an intended or unintended outcome.

Delivery optimisation

RQ: What changes are required to optimise delivery?

In this section, we outline participant views on programme refinement. We asked champions, teachers, mentors and pupils about their suggestions for improving CRC. Findings are presented for the following areas: training, programme delivery and overall programme planning and ongoing development.

Choices teacher training

There were three areas that teachers discussed regarding improvements to Choices training: mode of delivery, content of training and timing of receiving teaching resources.

Teachers considered **in-person training** as the most effective mode for maximising engagement. Whilst the need for virtual training (due to COVID-19 restrictions) was acknowledged, it was considered less conducive to engagement with attendees prone to *'switching off'*. In contrast, in-person training was thought to promote active engagement and allowed for an extended range of (*'hands-on')* activities.

[50] One relevant resource is the Centre for Youth Impact's Outcomes Framework 2.1, which sets out behavioural skill indicators for various socio-emotional skills (e.g. empathy or problem-solving) (McNeil and Stuart, 2022: 9).

Teachers suggested that **practical demonstrations** of how to use resources should be included in the training. A specific example given was demonstrations on how to use the Choices Lab, as written instructions were considered difficult to follow on their own.

Teachers reflected they would benefit from more detailed advice and guidance on teaching strategies, particularly in **facilitating classroom discussions**. They commented that whilst training videos showed teachers delivering sessions, these did not represent the 'real life' classroom context. Teachers reported that the videos showed small classes with around 10 pupils only, and pupils were consistently well-behaved. Teachers, therefore, felt that improvements could be made to both the quality and representativeness of Choices training materials.

Finally, teachers suggested they **receive teaching resources at the outset of training** rather than weekly. This would allow time for material digestion and prioritisation. The weekly individual lesson plans were considered too densely detailed, making it difficult for teachers to get a sense of the overall structure and prioritise content effectively.

Mentor training

This section covers mentors' suggestions for improvements to their training and pupil reflections on mentors' ability to effectively manage group dynamics in an inclusive and accessible manner.

Mentors suggested four improvements to training:

- Communicating administrative/detailed **information outside of training sessions**. e.g. rotas, safeguarding material via different mediums such as emails and written resources.
- Providing additional training content on **managing challenging behaviour**. Mentors described this as an area where expertise and confidence could be lacking. In pupil focus groups, pupils discussed a need for mentors to appropriately manage challenging, disruptive behaviour/discipline without being *'too strict'.*
- Extending **interactive improvisation training** activities. Mentors described their learning and development as benefiting from these sessions, as they *'pushed them outside of their comfort zone'.*
- Increased drawing on the skills and experience of the mentor peer group. Mentors were keen to enhance **learning from more experienced mentor peers**. A suggested approach was 'panel sessions', with new mentors receiving advice from peers.

In focus group discussions, pupils reflected on mentors' skills in managing group dynamics to ensure the inclusion of all group members, suggesting this is an area for improvement. Specifically, this related to mentors' ability to recognise the range of needs in the group and tailor facilitation accordingly to maximise inclusion and accessibility. A particular example was that pupils with additional needs were not being supported to actively participate. Pupils stated that the mentor did not recognise different ability levels in the group nor act to accommodate these:

'There are some people who need additional support, and then they would ask questions that only people who don't need additional support understand, and they [mentors] *didn't know that the people needed additional support, and basically, they never even let them participate. They never let them'.* **Pupil**

Choices programme delivery

Choices programme suggestions covered three areas: Choices stories and session content, technological adaptations to programme resources and session activities.

Stories and session content

Teachers thought the length of the Choices stories should be increased and storylines concluded, reporting that pupils were keen to read more. Pupils also reported that they were keen to read more stories, did not like *'cliffhanger'* endings and would prefer to know how the stories resolved. In addition, champions noted that not all Year Six pupils would continue with Choices in secondary school, meaning these pupils would 'miss out' on story conclusions.

A further suggestion from teachers was that the coherence between the Choices stories and the accompanying session content be improved. Teachers felt the link between the two could be tenuous, mentioning the session on grooming as an example:

'It was almost a bit tacked on the end; again, it didn't really fit with what we were reading in the story itself'. **Teacher**

Teachers commented that programme content could be improved with increased material on the transition to secondary school. This subject was seen as a key concern to Year Six pupils, and teachers believed they would benefit from increased content.

Teachers and pupils proposed that Choices content contain more video clips, as this was considered a more engaging medium for pupils than just reading. Pupils similarly discussed how videos could 'bring to life' the Choices characters' emotional worlds.

Teachers recommended that PowerPoint slides be made '*jazzier'*. The current slides were dully coloured, compromising appeal to pupils. Teachers also highlighted improvements of having additional prompts on slides to aid group discussions and having increased written content on slides to reduce reading from lesson plans.

Technological adaptations

Teachers, mentors and pupils all suggested that technological adaptations would make resources more useful. Teachers stated they would find it helpful if resources were uploaded to Google Classroom (we understand this platform is commonly used in schools). Champions and pupils highlighted a need for increased numbers of iPads to reduce the ratio of iPads to pupils. The current ratio (intended to be one iPad per three pupils, but in practice, it was one per four pupils in some cases) was deemed impractical in terms of the ease with which pupils could comfortably view the iPad and read the Choices stories text. Pupils suggested making checkpoint passwords visible to make it easier to navigate Choices stories and saving progress in the stories to avoid the need to complete all checkpoints each time they accessed the story. While the developers have clarified that some of these aspects (the iPad one-to-three ratios and checkpoints) were deliberate design choices, participants felt some small changes would improve Choices delivery.

Session activities

Finally, pupils stated they would like more varied activities in Choices sessions, primarily increased opportunities to engage in movement rather than being stationary at desks. Examples given of types of activities included role-playing scenes from the Choices stories and experiencing them in virtual reality.

Mentoring programme delivery

Suggestions regarding the mentoring programme covered two main areas: preparations for mentoring and mentoring implementation.

Preparations for mentoring

Champions, mentors and pupils suggested two types of adaptation: preparing pupils for mentoring and the amount of information given to mentors prior to mentoring starting.

Mentors recommended that pupils should be presented with a positive framing of the mentoring programme to avoid them feeling they had been selected on the basis of poor behaviour. Mentors felt this resulted in pupils entering mentoring apprehensively. To overcome such apprehension, mentors suggested pupils be given information about what mentoring is and the value of taking part, alongside practical information about sessions.

Mentors reflected on the value of being given additional contextual information about pupils prior to delivery, although there were contrasting views on the merits of this. One view was that this information was valuable and enhanced mentors' ability to perform their roles. A contrasting view was that receiving additional information about pupils could harmfully inform mentors' perceptions of pupils, and they would prefer to mentor *'with an open mind'.*

Mentoring implementation

Pupils reflected on mentors' delivery styles and expressed the view that mentors did not consistently 'hit the right note' in this area and that, in some cases, a more traditional, professional style would be preferable. For example, pupils discussed mentors being *'cringe-worthy'* in their use of slang terms.

Teachers, mentors and pupils reflected that improvements could be made to the organisation and planning of mentoring sessions and that this would result in smoother implementation. In particular, mentors stressed the need for a designated protected space that was fit for purpose as fundamental to ensuring sessions took place in an appropriate environment. Mentors perceived that finding appropriate space presented a challenge for school settings with fewer resources and provided an example of a school cancelling a mentoring session because of no space being available.

A further concern mentors expressed was about sessions having adequate protected time that did not infringe on pupils' break times. Pupils explained how sessions overran into lunchtimes, resulting in them being *'hangry'* and losing part of their break. Teachers suggested that champions could take increased responsibility for space and timing logistics as a solution to these challenges.

Finally, pupils expressed a desire for mentoring sessions to include increased creative and interactive content. Suggestions covered sessions being held outdoors, more games, role-playing and craft activities.

Overall programme planning and ongoing development

There were recurring suggestions from different groups of participants on overall programme planning and structuring, the development of the CRC programme over time and the expansion of the mentoring offer.

Programme planning and structuring

Champions found the volume of communications from Lime *'overwhelming'.* They suggested a reduction in both the number of emails and the length of emails, making them *'streamlined'* (i.e. stating only actions and deadlines).

Champions also suggested that all teachers involved in CRC delivery receive email correspondence. This was considered a more direct route for information dissemination and would remove the need for champions to perform this role.

Mentors reflected that the timing in the school year of the Choices and mentoring programme delivery should be considered. While mentoring was intended to follow straight on from the Choices sessions, some mentors reported that there had been a time gap between pupils finishing Choices and mentoring commencing, which should be reduced. Mentors stated that some pupils had forgotten the Choices content, particularly between Years Five and Six.

Development of the programme

Teachers suggested that opportunities to reflect on the programme more widely, with peers from other schools, would be beneficial. This would provide an opportunity to give feedback to programme developers and discuss best practice. In addition, champions and mentors echoed the desire for **more reflective opportunities** to be built into the programme. Champions stated they would appreciate information from mentors about pupils' progress in sessions to inform monitoring pupil outcomes. Mentors also expressed a desire to receive feedback from schools about pupils' progress at the conclusion of mentoring.

Teachers discussed ideas about keeping **content engaging and relevant** to pupils. They suggested Choices stories be changed periodically to keep them fresh to teach so that teachers would remain enthusiastic and convey interest to pupils. In addition, mentors commented that the subject matter might need to be updated to address topical issues relevant to pupils:

'There's always things that are evolving in communities, and in society, that may [need to] mean that the programme might need to reflect that, implement some changes'. **Mentor**

Expansion of mentoring

A recurring theme from teachers, mentors and pupils was the proposed expansion of mentoring to a greater number of pupils (i.e. increasing its reach):

- Champions wanted to see more pupils benefit from mentoring, either by having more mentors or bigger groups.
- Pupils also expressed this view, stating they had peers who would benefit from mentoring.
- Some group mentoring pupils noted they would like to access one-on-one mentoring sessions, as this would enable them to share sensitive thoughts and concerns in a more private setting.

The expansion of mentoring was also discussed in terms of dosage, namely longer sessions, more sessions and increasing the number of one-on-one mentoring sessions per pupil:

- Mentors and pupils described the **session length** (60 minutes) as being too short. This was particularly mentioned about the final mentoring session as feeling '*abrupt'*. There was inadequate time to conduct all elements of the final session (recap the content from across the sessions, conduct pupil evaluations and say goodbye). Pupils suggested mentoring sessions last a full morning or afternoon school period.
- Pupils commented on the value of the mentoring programme in preparing them for transition to secondary school and recommended the programme be **extended until the end of Year Six**:

  'It shouldn't happen just for six to eight weeks; it should have been until we went to secondary school because they definitely made it more positive'. **Pupil**

- Mentors reflected that pupils receiving one-on-one mentoring would benefit from **increased numbers of sessions**. This was explained in terms of four sessions being too limited a time frame in which to effectively bond with pupils and establish sufficient trust and rapport to meet these pupils' (higher) needs. Mentors suggested that the one-on-one programme be enhanced by increasing the number of sessions and one-on-one sessions running concurrently with the group mentoring:

  'You're having to get to learn a student and then make sure that they're comfortable, and then by the time they're comfortable, it's week four, and it's like, "Goodbye"'. **Mentor**

Scalability

RQ: Can the intervention be delivered at scale?

This pilot study did not involve interviews with developers of the CRC Project. Because of this, we cannot draw on developer views on what would be required for scaling up the intervention. One implication is that an outstanding question is whether it is possible for Titan to scale up delivery to a larger number of schools if required. Furthermore, we did not directly ask our participants about scalability. Nevertheless, there are a number of findings from this study that are likely to affect scaling up.

First, the data suggests that the intervention, and particularly the universal element, is generally **well-defined and specified**. This is important if the programme is to be replicated across a higher number of schools.

Second, participants reported a **high level of teacher burden** for the Choices component. Time spent on administration, preparation and adaptation was described as too burdensome. This would need to be reviewed for scaling up the intervention.

Third, the high level of support and input from the CRC Project team may not be sustainable across a larger number of schools or a wider geographic area. Findings suggest that the **central team's input** could be condensed in several ways. Firstly, training could be reduced by only new teachers attending training or cascading CRC training by existing staff delivering training within schools. Secondly, support systems could be set up during programme delivery within schools and between teachers delivering Choices to reduce the need for support from the CRC Project team. These practices are not currently in the CRC delivery plan but were all discussed during interviews with teachers and CRC champions.

Fourth, the findings on the mentoring component suggest some evidence of consistent delivery, acknowledging that mentoring allows for and encourages flexibility in terms of session planning and content. However, there were also **inconsistencies in mentoring** which need to be clarified and/or addressed:

- Our data suggests that the reach and dosage of mentoring were variable across schools and pupils (though we note that these findings only relate to pupils in the evaluation dataset and that the sample size for the one-on-one mentoring pupils is small, so it should be treated with caution): a) the proportion of pupils receiving the targeted component varied considerably between schools, b) our data showed that in some schools there were no one-on-one mentoring pupils and c) in some cases, according to attendance data, one-on-one mentoring pupils had no group mentoring and received fewer (or more) than the planned four sessions of one-on-one mentoring. Administrative data collected for this pilot could be used by the developers to refine targets for the mentoring component (including whether targets for group and one-on-one mentoring should function at the school level or across schools).
- Our findings show that pupils are selected for a wide range of reasons with varying levels of need. We note that the project aim of identifying children at the highest risk of exploitation/criminality was not apparent in participant accounts. Rather, the selection was based on well-being scores from the SCWBS plus teacher knowledge. School staff were focused on choosing children who would benefit from greater support, primarily focusing on well-being-related factors instead of considering the risk of exploitation/criminality[51]. In our view, the project would benefit from greater clarity around the criteria for selection. In addition, our findings suggest there is some uncertainty around how one-on-one pupils were identified (as opposed to the overall selection for the targeted component).
- The role of the CRC champions in relation to the mentoring component was not always clear or consistent across schools.
- There were also logistical challenges relating to room allocation for mentoring within schools, with some spaces not fit for purpose.

In addition to these study findings, as evaluators, our interpretation is that there are three areas which would benefit from attention before scaling up the intervention:

- **A greater focus on programme inclusivity and accessibility**. This specifically relates to pupils with SEND. Changes may involve further research, developing training and/or increased advice and resources for CRC champions, teachers and mentors on how to adapt activities to enable pupils with additional needs to access the CRC Project.
- **Improved data collection processes**. Avoiding teacher and school burden is a constraint which has had implications for the quality of quantitative data. If the intervention were to scale up, we recommend considering how to successfully and reliably collect data from teachers and/or schools (and thereby rely less on pupil self-reported data for background characteristics).

[51] The developers, in response to this report, have clarified that the selection process was not intended to assess a pupil's risk of exploitation or criminality. Rather, they point out that the SCWBS score highlights low well-being, which is associated with vulnerability, and there is evidence that both of these factors are correlated with future victimisation or criminality (see discussion in the Intervention chapter).

- If **logic model refinements** are made (as suggested above), resulting in additional details on mentoring alongside a smaller number of more tightly-specified outcomes, this would aid in the consistent roll-out of the programme to a larger number of schools.

Suitability of outcome measures

RQ: Have suitable outcome measures been identified for evaluation?

Evidence

The success criteria for the pilot were discussed at the start of this chapter and covered a number of areas relating to outcome measure suitability. In brief, the outcome measures meet the success criteria in terms of having strong internal validity and correlating with each other in the expected direction. However, they did not show mean pre-post improvement in scores. Attrition between baseline and endline per se is not possible to estimate with the data we have received from the developers; however, 21% of the cohort did not complete the endline survey, and total pilot attrition amounted to c.40%. Lastly, we were unable to check for systematic issues with missing item data due to the way the surveys were administered.

In addition, we conducted analysis on the SRS subscales used in this study (we used a subset of six scales – see Methods section) in line with the pilot's aim to verify the reliability and validity of the subscales with an English sample. The detailed results are reported in Appendix B in the Technical Appendix (see Tables A4–A6). In summary, pupils' scores on all subscales were significantly and positively correlated with one another at the 1% level. All subscales correlated more strongly with overall scores than with any other specific subscale, although some were more closely related than others. For instance, the communication subscale correlated most strongly with the self-esteem, empathy and problem-solving subscales. Self-esteem was also quite strongly correlated with problem-solving and goals and aspirations. Problem-solving was the subscale most strongly correlated with SRS scores as a whole. Meanwhile, it is clear that the total SRS scale has higher internal consistency than the individual subscales. This is likely in large part due to the low number of items, but nonetheless supports our decision to use SRS as a single scale rather than individual subscales.

The pilot findings have indicated a lack of clarity around some of the outcomes included in the logic model. Two relevant questions in terms of identifying suitable outcome measures are: a) which are the primary project outcomes, and b) which outcomes clearly relate to programme activities (as opposed to more general social or emotional development that might be expected in Years Five and Six)? The suggestions for logic model refinement earlier in this chapter would help to answer these questions and aid future evaluations by having greater focus and specificity in the model.

Evaluator recommendations

This study used three different outcome measure scales, all pupil self-report, covering well-being, emotional and behavioural difficulties and resilience. As illustrated in Table 4 in the Methods chapter, there is some overlap in the coverage of the scales, and the fit between these scales and the specific pupil outcomes in the logic model is not always clear. The scales cover broad areas such as well-being or mental outlook, and while the individual survey items ask about more specific elements, the scales are intended to be used in analysis as a single overall score. This is useful for a general understanding of a pupil's well-being (or for identifying pupils that need additional support). However, it is challenging for overall scores like this to

provide evidence of specific or granular outcomes related to project activities. We also note that the pilot study's outcome measures were not designed to capture evidence of the project *impact* (of reduced involvement in youth crime). The focus was on project outcomes, as the intention was that these outcomes could be achieved in the evaluation time frame.

In addition, there are currently few outcomes in the logic model that can be directly observed or assessed externally (for example, by teachers), and those that are included, such as attendance, are not outcome measures in this study. While pupil self-reported scales are beneficial in terms of capturing an individual's mental outlook and well-being, they do not directly measure changes in behaviour. The latter would be cognitively difficult for pupils to self-report and would be more straightforward for teachers to assess (at the pupil level).

In our view, for these reasons, the outcome measures could be improved by identifying the primary outcomes that should be measured (this might involve reducing the number of pupil self-report scales), alongside identifying some extrinsic outcome measures and drawing on a wider range of data sources. These changes would lead to improvements in three ways: achieving a closer alignment between outcome measures and logic model outcomes, the addition of extrinsic outcome measures and the collection of outcome data from teachers or schools. Reducing the number of pupil self-report scales would also reduce respondent burden and could have a positive effect on data quality.

Using pupil self-reported scales in addition to teacher-assessed measures would mean a future trial could triangulate these different types and sources of data rather than relying on pupil self-reported scales, giving more confidence in the findings.

In terms of which extrinsic outcome measures to include, two possible outcomes are already included in the logic model:

- School attendance (this could be measured using school admin data) and
- Increased attainment (this is listed as an unintended outcome, though our participants saw it as a project outcome).

Levels of exclusion might also be seen as an indicator of various logic model outcomes: increased self-regulation, avoidance of harmful behaviours, managing risk and better decision-making, and again would be straightforward to collect[52]. This could potentially be added to the logic model as part of the suggested refinements (above) to more explicitly set out *how* the current outcomes translate into measurable behaviour change.

When choosing measures, we recommend revisiting the original work on selecting outcome measures, incorporating views from NatCen, YEF and the developers (see Methods section). We include suggestions for additional outcome measures in the next section.

[52] The CRC Project website notes that schools collect key metrics which are viewed as indicators of future more serious behavioural issues, such as reductions in playground incidents and fewer exclusions (fixed and permanent). Available at URL: https://www.titan.org.uk/activities/confident-resilient-children-project/

Evaluation of feasibility for trial

Overall, the findings above show that some success criteria have been met: Schools implement the project in full and reasonably consistently[53], the intervention is acceptable and engaging; qualitative data suggests progress towards outcomes for children, and outcome measures have good internal validity and are correlated with each other in the expected direction. However, other success criteria have not been met: We found no mean improvement in pre-post scores, attrition was at a higher than estimated level[54] and we were unable to test levels of item missing data (we recommend further work is needed to establish whether online administration of the outcome measures should offer a 'skip' code or not).

Based on the overall project findings, our judgement is that the project should progress to a pilot trial rather than a full efficacy trial. This would strengthen the evidence about the programme while allowing for various refinements to be made and revised approaches to be tested.

In this section, we discuss our recommendations for a potential future evaluation. We start with overall procedures, then set out recommendations for the quantitative data collection and for the qualitative element.

Overall sampling/recruitment/retention procedures

- Select a more representative sample of schools based on sampling criteria rather than ability to deliver the programme (sampling criteria might include size, % free school meals (FSM), previous experience of programme delivery). This would allow the evaluator to assess programme delivery and outcomes across a wider range of schools.
- Have a comparison group for drawing inferences about the counterfactual (what would have happened in the absence of the intervention). Scoping out possible designs for this element is out of scope, but based on our understanding of the project, we suggest that if randomisation is used, this would need to be at the school level, not class/year/pupil level (due to the risks of spillover effects if some children within a school received the intervention while others did not). Depending on various factors, including budget, a waitlist design might be considered most desirable, given possible ethical concerns about withholding interventions from possible participants.
- Change opt-out procedures (with ethical approval) to include only activities which directly collect data from pupils (this would mean that observations of sessions could go ahead, as they would not be part of the opt-out procedure).
- While it is out of scope for this pilot evaluation to estimate sample sizes for a potential future trial, regression analysis shows that all outcome scores at baseline are significantly and positively predicted by their respective baseline scores. The pre-post correlation of the outcome scores in the regression will help inform future decisions on sample sizes (e.g. through power calculations) for potential future efficacy trials of the CRC (see R-squared in Table 13). Typically, the baseline score of an outcome could explain a high per cent of variance in that particular outcome at endline. For instance, one would expect individuals' well-being before the intervention to be closely and positively related, on average, to their well-being after the intervention. As stated above in 'Success

[53] With a small number of exceptions, such as the delivery of one-on-one mentoring sessions.

[54] In part, this was due to higher than anticipated levels of absence for the baseline/endline survey (due to COVID-19). Attrition was also affected by data matching and data quality issues.

criteria', based on the figures we have, it appears that total attrition was greater than the estimated 20%. Given the impact of COVID-19 on these figures, a future trial may record different levels of attrition.

Quantitative data collection

The previous section on the suitability of outcome measures offered recommendations that we, as evaluators, feel would improve quantitative data collection instruments for any future evaluation of CRC. The recommendations below focus on enhancing the *process* of quantitative data collection:

- Consider a **later stage of data collection**, for example, in the following school year, to assess outcomes over a longer time period.
- Collect **administrative data on pupil characteristics (e.g. ethnicity and gender) from schools** rather than from pupils.
- Consider the use of a **unique pupil identifier** used across all data tools (for example, pupil survey, teacher survey, attendance records), allowing for a more reliable method of merging data. Linked to this, we recommend the evaluator have greater oversight or input into quantitative data collection processes.
- Carry out further research into whether the survey scales should allow participants to 'skip' questions or not. This is implicitly allowed in a paper and pen administration of surveys, but when administered online, the decision is taken by the programmer.
  Collect data at the school or pupil level about the **experience and dosage of the programme in the previous school year**; this could be used in the analysis to check for programme effects and/or to assess cumulative effects between Year Five and Year Six outcomes. Alternatively (though this raises methodological challenges for data collection and length of evaluation), if the full programme is considered to be a two-year programme (Year Five and Year Six), the timing of the baseline and endline data collection could be changed to the start of Year Five and end of Year Six, respectively.

Qualitative data collection

As evaluators, our view is that a potential further pilot evaluation would not need to simply repeat the qualitative IPE element of this study. However, we recommend the following to enhance the qualitative element of any future study:

- Add a research question about the **differentiation of the programme from 'business as usual'** (activities and outcomes).
- Include **interviews with programme developers** in order to have their input (for example, on questions of scalability and the input from the central CRC team).
- Aim for a **higher number of mentors and teachers** in the sample to collect a wider range of views and experiences (including teachers working in a range of different school settings).
- Consider different approaches to maximise the effectiveness of **asking about outcomes** in qualitative encounters (for example, drawing on a wider range of techniques to elicit reflections).
- Weigh up the benefits and drawbacks of including interviews with **parents**. If this element is included, explore more effective recruitment processes, for example, offering incentives for participation and/or approaching parents at a meeting at school (e.g. a CRC Project information evening) to invite them to take part.

Conclusion

The CRC Project is a primary school intervention for Year Five and Year Six pupils that aims to help children develop strategies to make good decisions and achieve positive long-term outcomes. Ultimately, the overall project impact is to keep pupils safe from exploitation and criminality.

Through a universal component (Choices), all Year Five and Year Six pupils are supported by their teacher to better understand themselves, the things that influence their behaviour and their decision-making. Additional targeted support is provided to a smaller number of pupils considered more at risk. A trained mentor delivers mentoring (group and one-on-one sessions for a small subset), which builds on and consolidates the universal component.

Table 22 gives a summary of the pilot findings for each research question.

Table 22. Summary of pilot study findings

Research question	Finding
Evidence of feasibility How and why are schools recruited to the intervention?	Schools were existing Titan Partnership members or were invited to participate by Titan. Schools' decisions to participate were based on a perceived good fit between the intervention and school strategy and addressing pupil needs and vulnerabilities.
How is the CRC Project implemented in practice, and what adaptations are made to delivery?	**Choices:** Training was offered to all schools, with teachers attending an initial one-hour workshop. Most schools received training in person; others online (due to COVID-19). Choices sessions were delivered by teachers who adopted a facilitator delivery style. Pupils read Choices stories, sharing an iPad in small groups. Ground rules were consistently applied. **Adaptations:** Teachers adapted slides and lesson plans and changed session structure, e.g. one split over two half-hour sessions. This was to ensure that the slides were appropriate for all pupils and to ease the delivery process. **Mentoring:** Mentors undertook initial training, followed by ongoing training every four to six weeks. Across schools, pupils were consistently selected for mentoring using a 'case conference' approach, combining SCWBS scores and school knowledge of pupil needs. Group session content reflected the key aims of the CRC Project. Mentors' delivery styles were personalised and distinctive from teachers' delivery. **Adaptations**: Session content and activities were adapted to suit pupils' needs and interests (an expected approach to delivery). Mentors expanded the mentoring offer to include more pupils in group sessions.
What are the challenges and enablers to delivering the intervention as intended?	**Choices:** Enablers included the clarity of CRC resources, digital mode of delivery and responsiveness of the CRC Project team. Challenges included the volume of content to deliver per session, limitations of iPad usage, (limited) time available for CRC champion tasks and unsuitable timing of emails containing lesson plans. **Mentoring:** Enablers included tailoring content to pupil needs and having single-gender groups to aid group dynamics. Challenges included more pupils identified as needing support than mentoring spaces available, lack of clarity about pupil selection via SCWBS scores and logistics (communication with schools and inappropriate spaces for mentoring). Managing group dynamics could be challenging due to a 'lack of fit' between pupils. The number of one-on-one sessions was seen as 'too short'.
What is the intervention reach and dosage?	**Choices:** Across evaluation schools, all Year Five and Year Six pupils participated. Choices lessons lasted between 40 and 90 minutes each (compared with the intended 60 minutes) and were typically delivered once per week (for 11 weeks each year). The full programme of 11 sessions was delivered in both Year Five and Year Six. **Mentoring:** Across schools, 150 pupils (15%) received the targeted component[55], 20 of whom (13% of the targeted group) received one-on-one mentoring (results for this group should be treated with caution due to the small sample size). Group mentoring was delivered to Years Five and Six in all schools. The evaluation dataset showed that three schools did not have any one-on-one mentoring pupils. Mentoring sessions were delivered weekly, with group sessions lasting an hour and one-on-one sessions lasting between 30 minutes and one hour. Pupils could attend between seven and eight group mentoring sessions (target eight) and between one and eight sessions for one-on-one mentoring (target four).

[55] Identified as those who attended at least one one-on-one/group mentoring session.

Is the intervention acceptable to teachers, mentors and children? How engaged are teachers, mentors and children in the intervention?	**Choices acceptability:** Training was well received by teachers, with a preference for in-person training. Teachers and pupils found the content and format of Choices lessons acceptable. Teachers considered pupil discussion a feature which positively affected pupils' development. The tension between time available for session delivery and depth of topic coverage negatively impacted teacher assessments of overall programme value. **Choices engagement:** Teachers demonstrated sustained engagement throughout the programme, from training to implementation. Pupil engagement was also high, particularly enjoying interactive activities with peers. **Mentoring acceptability:** Training prepared mentors for delivery and kept skills updated. The pupil selection process was mostly seen as acceptable and as selecting the right pupils. However, there were some challenges, including the information provided to parents and pupils about mentoring. Mentors were generally acceptable to school staff and pupils, described as friendly, skilled, engaging and kind. The mentoring session content was seen as relevant to the challenges pupils faced. **Mentoring engagement:** Mentors were consistently engaged in training and delivery activities. Pupils largely engaged well due to positive relationships between pupils and mentors. However, engagement varied between different groups, with pupils with SEND and/or different needs finding participation in group sessions challenging.
Evidence of promise What is the change in children's social and emotional outcomes and resilience?	Quantitative analysis found little change in outcome measure scores over the trial period, and where changes were found, the differences are small and do not all show improvement in outcomes. Both quantitative and qualitative findings suggest that there was the greatest progress for pupils receiving the targeted element (though caution is needed in the interpretation of this, as the targeted group had the lowest scores and therefore the most room for improvement – in quantitative terms, this may reflect regression to the mean). Overall, we caution against drawing conclusions about the programme's impact due to the lack of a control group. The qualitative analysis revealed a wide range of views about pupil outcomes. One view (from mentors, CRC champions and teachers) was that they were not able to identify any changes in pupil outcomes. In contrast, another view (from all groups of participants) was that there had been a number of changes for pupils, most notably increased confidence; greater resilience (and linked to that a 'growth mindset'); improved relationships with others, suggesting greater empathy, understanding and self-regulation; and feeling less anxious and more prepared to transition to secondary school. These outcomes broadly align with the logic model, though they do not necessarily match the short-, medium- and long-term categorisation.
What changes, if any, are made to teacher and mentor practice and school support for children at risk of becoming vulnerable to criminal exploitation as a result of the programme?	Teachers, CRC champions and mentors were not always able to identify outcomes of the CRC Project for themselves. However, several outcomes were reported for their own practice and their schools. Many of the outcomes for teachers and schools align with the logic model, including improved ability to facilitate CYP discussions more broadly and manage difficult conversations, improved relationships with pupils, improved identification of children in need of additional support and enhanced PSHE and RSE delivery. Some logic model outcomes did not feature in participant accounts. These primarily related to the increased capability for teachers to plan Choices lessons and safeguarding processes. In terms of the research question, school staff did not explicitly relate these outcomes to the wider aim of supporting children at risk of criminal exploitation. Mentors also noted changes to their practice, mainly that their mentoring ability and practice with CYP with different needs had improved.
Are there any adverse or unintended consequences?	Adverse consequences were uncommon and related to two areas: ● Choices pupils, on occasion, made poor choices, such as accessing inappropriate content online, and displayed negative behaviour, such as mocking other pupils. ● Pupils missed other lessons or curriculum content to complete the CRC Project. Increased pupil academic attainment, such as improvement in school's SATs results, was the main unintended consequence (this is identified as an unintended consequence in the logic model).
Readiness for trial What changes, if any, are needed to the intervention logic model?	Qualitative participants reported a number of pupil outcomes listed in the logic model. However, the alignment between participant accounts and logic model pupil outcomes was not always clear-cut. Areas for potential refinement to the logic model are: ● Training: Update activities for teachers, and include activities for mentors. ● Include key session content (for Choices and mentoring). ● Consider adding change mechanisms for programme activities which can indicate *quality* (for example, pupils feel sessions are a safe space). ● Consider reducing the number of pupil outcomes and assigning a hierarchy to help prioritise them. ● Review the assignment of pupil outcomes to short, medium or long term. ● Consider showing links between intrinsic and extrinsic outcomes to make the process towards the project's long-term outcomes and impact more explicit. ● Review unintended pupil outcomes, specifically whether to include a positive attitude to the transition to secondary school. ● Review whether the intended outcomes for all groups are important for the programme to achieve its goals.

What changes are required to optimise delivery?	Participant suggestions for programme refinement were as follows: **Choices teacher training:** ● preference for in-person, with practical demonstrations of how to use resources, ● further guidance on facilitating classroom discussion and ● improve materials and receive teaching resources at the outset of training. **Mentor training:** ● increase content on managing challenging behaviour and expansion of interactive improvisation training activities and ● enhance opportunities to learn from more experienced mentor peers. **Choices programme:** ● increase the length of Choices stories and conclude storylines, improve coherence between Choices stories and session content, ● increase content on the transition to secondary school, ● include more video clips and make PowerPoint slides more visually appealing, ● technological adaptations to increase the utility of resources, ● increase the number of iPads (to reduce iPad/pupil ratio) and ● increase variation in Choices session activities. **Mentoring programme:** ● present pupils with positive framing of their selection for mentoring, ● consider providing mentors with contextual information about pupils' needs, ● preference for more professional/traditional mentors' delivery style, ● improve logistics, e.g. designated protected space and time for sessions and ● include increased creative and interactive content in sessions. **Programme planning and development:** ● streamline communications to champions and extend information to teachers, ● build reflection opportunities into the programme to support learning, ● ensure Choices content is topical and relevant to pupils and ● expand mentoring to more pupils, with increased dosage (e.g. longer sessions, more sessions and increasing the number of one-on-one sessions per pupil).
Can the intervention be delivered at scale?	The findings suggest the intervention is generally well-defined. This is important if the intervention is to be replicated across a higher number of schools. Our view as evaluators is that scalability would be improved by addressing the following areas: ● reduce Choices teachers' burden (e.g. time for preparation/adaptation), ● condense the CRC Project team's input, e.g. offer training to only new teachers, ● ensure consistent delivery of one-on-one mentoring in terms of reach and dosage, ● improve clarity and consistency of the CRC champion role in relation to mentoring, ● improve communication with parents and pupils selected for mentoring to maximise parental consent and reduce pupil apprehension/misunderstanding and ● improve data collection and monitoring (processes and measures).
Have suitable outcome measures been identified for evaluation?	The study's outcome measures meet some of the success criteria but not others. We recommend changes to outcome measures for future evaluation, such as: ● identifying a smaller number of outcome measures for pupils (this is in line with the proposed changes in the logic model), ● including extrinsic outcome measures (e.g. attendance) and ● including school-collected/teacher-assessed measures to triangulate with data from pupil self-report scales.

Evaluator judgement of intervention and evaluation feasibility

The CRC Project is a mature intervention which has been implemented reasonably consistently across schools, teachers and mentors, and in line with the logic model, with a small number of exceptions (such as the delivery of one-on-one mentoring sessions). The overall programme is feasible and acceptable to school staff, mentors and pupils. Views on outcomes for pupils varied, but there is evidence of promise in qualitative accounts, and the perceived outcomes are broadly aligned with the logic model. In contrast, the quantitative data shows little change in pupil outcome measures over the trial period. Meanwhile, views on outcomes for schools, teachers and mentors varied; perceived outcomes for these groups were in line with the logic model.

In addition to addressing some of the challenges to delivery and making suggestions for delivery optimisation, as evaluators, we suggest that some broader aspects of the intervention should be reviewed for future delivery.

First, there were a number of **inconsistencies in mentoring delivery**. While mentoring sessions are tailored and adapted to meet pupils' needs and interests, which is an expected approach to delivery, our data also showed there were variations in reach and dosage which were not in line with the logic model. We note that targeted interventions can be challenging to evaluate in terms of assessing the extent to which they are implemented as expected. One option would be to develop a compliance measure. This would define the scope of the mentoring session parameters to ensure core elements are delivered to all participants (and make clear which elements are flexible). Related to this, details on key content for Choices sessions could also be specified in the logic model. In addition, greater clarity on the criteria for selecting pupils for the targeted element and for one-on-one mentoring would be beneficial.

Second, findings indicate that **time was a significant barrier for teachers** to implementing the CRC Project as intended. Teachers considered the volume of content for each session to be too large and reported challenges completing all administrative tasks. They were also unsure about the extent to which they could adapt resources and prioritise content. This finding should be considered within the wider educational context, where teachers already have high workloads. It also highlights tension, with participants expressing a desire for additional content or new topics. This relates to suggestions from pupils, teachers and mentors that content and activities need to be engaging in both Choices and mentoring. While some pupils' suggestions to this end may not be realistic, ensuring that sessions were engaging and activities varied were recurring themes. One possibility is to change resources to clearly indicate core content while allowing some flexibility. This would make it easier for teachers to adapt lesson content when they are short of time and might allow for an element of choice (e.g. for content that is particularly relevant to an individual school or context).

Third, findings also suggest that both the Choices and mentoring components would benefit from a more thorough consideration of **inclusivity and accessibility**. This may include supporting SEND pupils with completing the initial questionnaire and equipping teachers and mentors with resources and strategies for differentiating support. Additional SEND training across the programme could underpin these changes. We note that YEF points to the overrepresentation of SEND children in the youth justice system, which highlights the importance of ensuring the CRC Project is reaching those children[56].

Finally, the topics of risk, criminal activity, exploitation, vulnerability and violence, which form the context for the CRC Project, have not featured strongly in participant accounts. These topics were not expected to feature in programme content, as the project aims to equip young people with skills to keep them safe from exploitation. However, our findings **do not indicate *how* the programme activities and outcomes connect with the overall project aims** to keep pupils safe from being criminally exploited. It is also the case that pupil selection for the targeted element is focused on those who need support (for a wide range of reasons) rather than those at the highest risk of criminality. Some of the suggestions for logic model refinement and clearer criteria for mentoring selection may help to fill this gap by making the links or the process more explicit.

We recommend the following changes to the design for any potential future evaluation.

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[56] '*There's real disproportionality in youth justice, with significant overrepresentation of Black and Asian children, looked-after children and children with special educational needs'. Available at:* https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/our-200-million-10-year-strategy-to-prevent-children-becoming-involved-in-violence/

Overall design

- Include a comparison group.
- Select a wider range of schools based on sampling criteria.
- Consider a later data collection time point to assess longer-term outcomes.
- Refine the logic model to achieve greater clarity, focus and specificity. In particular, we recommend identifying primary/secondary outcome(s) and including extrinsic outcomes (these might include attendance and exclusions).
- Modify the opt-out procedure (with ethical approval) for parents and pupils to cover research activities that collect data directly from pupils (not observations).
- Improve opt-out communications with parents and schools, more clearly highlighting how the consent procedure is in line with GDPR regulations.

Quantitative methods

- Based on a refined logic model, review (and possibly reduce) the current outcome measures (pupil self-report scales). Include extrinsic outcome measures, such as attendance, alongside an additional source of data, such as teacher assessment of pupil behaviour.
- Improve data quality and refine data processes, including collecting administrative data from schools (rather than from pupils) and reviewing the method for data matching. Ideally, the latter would utilise a unique pupil identifier to address the attrition of cases at the matching stage.
- We recommend that further thought is given to whether to allow pupils to 'skip' questions in the pupil surveys. This would involve scrutinising the relevant literature and previous research studies, together with discussions with the client.
- Collect data on prior intervention experience (for example, whether Year Six pupils received the programme in Year Five) to allow analysis to take account of different levels of programme dosage. Alternatively (though this raises methodological challenges), if the full intervention is considered to be a two-year programme, the timing of the baseline and endline data collection could be changed to match this.

Qualitative methods

- Add a research question on differentiation from 'business as usual'. Some Choices content mirrors PSHE content (such as 'growth mindset', peer relationships, risks and transitions to secondary school). This additional research question would allow us to evidence whether and how Choices lessons are distinct from existing provisions.
- Include stakeholders who were not included or were underrepresented in this study:
  - CRC Project developers: to discuss scalability, centralised delivery, programme planning and suitability of outcome measures.
  - Parents: Communication with parents and parent outcomes have been identified as areas for refinement, so incorporating parent voice would be beneficial.
  - Teachers and mentors from a broader range of schools: to capture a wider range of experiences of the CRC Project.

Limitations

The methods and design of this pilot study had several limitations that impacted the extent to which conclusions can be drawn from the findings in this report.

- COVID-19: The continued impact of COVID-19 on schools meant that some Choices sessions were cancelled or moved; this also affected one-on-one mentoring delivery. Teacher illness due to COVID-19 also meant it was not possible to complete interviews with all teachers and CRC champions in our sample.
- Parental opt-outs impacted the number of observations of Choices lessons and mentoring sessions that could be conducted. Our target was to achieve four observations of each type of session, whereas we achieved one Choices session observation and two mentoring session observations, meaning we had less observational data than planned.
- Schools were put forward by Titan based on their previous experience of and ability to deliver the CRC programme. This is likely to have impacted the findings, as these schools are not representative of all schools delivering the intervention. However, the sample did include a variety of small and large primary schools.
- This study could not assess longer-term outcomes or the overall project impact, as the data collection took place during and shortly after the intervention time frame.
- The lack of a control group limits the extent to which any pre-post differences found in the quantitative data can be attributed to the CRC programme.
- The study protocol and aggregate level quantitative analysis treated Year Five and Year Six pupils as a single cohort, though they had different experiences of the programme (in particular, Year Five pupils had only participated in the Year Five component of the programme at the time of the endline survey).
- Higher than anticipated levels of absence for the baseline/endline survey (likely due to COVID-19), combined with data matching and data quality issues, contributed to an attrition rate of around 40% (we estimated 20% in the study protocol for attrition between baseline and endline).
- The baseline and endline survey administration and matching processes had a number of limitations, including data quality issues, notably for background variables. This contributed to challenges in data matching, as did the lack of a unique study identifier for each respondent.
- The number of one-on-one mentoring pupils in the evaluation dataset was small (n = 20), meaning caution is required around the findings for this group (this relates to reach and dosage data).
- Visits to eight evaluation schools were planned; however, only seven visits were carried out. This was due to conflicting priorities in schools during the fieldwork period (e.g. SATs).
- We were unable to carry out interviews with parents/carers of pupils who received mentoring due to difficulties recruiting parents through the school.
- The protocol did not include interviews with the developers, meaning some clarifications came at the reporting stage rather than during data collection.
- The number of achieved interviews with CRC champions was lower than intended due to the very limited availability of staff.
- Some of the findings from pupil focus groups were made in a joking or insincere way. This could suggest pupils were not answering truthfully and were instead reacting to the group dynamic.

Future research

The intervention is delivered reasonably consistently in evaluation schools and is received positively by participants. One (small) exception is mentoring reach and dosage: In some schools, the targeted component was delivered to a higher proportion of pupils than intended, while one-on-one mentoring was more variable and did not meet targets in all schools.

Some success criteria have been met:

- Schools implemented the project in full and reasonably consistently.
- The intervention is acceptable and engaging.
- Qualitative data suggests progress towards outcomes for pupils.
- Outcome measures have good internal validity and are correlated with each other and in the expected direction.

Other success criteria have not been met:

- There was no mean improvement in pre-post scores.
- Attrition was at a higher than the estimated level.
- We were unable to test levels of item missing data for outcome measures.

Based on this evidence, our judgement is that the project should progress to a pilot trial. This would allow a number of refinements to the CRC Project delivery, logic model, outcome measures and evaluation design and for all of these changes to be tested before progressing to a full efficacy trial. A pilot trial would have a comparison group, allowing for greater confidence about programme effects. The study design could involve choosing and testing revised outcome measures and data collection procedures (including those that were not successfully tested in this pilot). YEF guidance now requires pilots to have a comparison group. Our advice aligns with that, as our view is that the understanding of this intervention and any evidence of promise would be enhanced by comparisons of the treatment group with a control group.

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Technical Appendix

Appendix A - Qualitative fieldwork materials

1.1 Participant information sheets

Pupil information sheet

What do you think about the Confident Resilient Children Project?

Information for Year 5 and Year 6 pupils

What is this about?

All Year 5s and 6s in your school are taking part in the Confident Resilient Children (CRC) project. You will work through Marcus' Story or Kwan's Story. We are doing research to find out what pupils think about these lessons, including what they like and don't like.

Who is doing the research?

NatCen Social Research are doing this research for the **Youth Endowment Fund**. Your school is helping us.

What will taking part involve?

You are invited to take part in:

- an online questionnaire about your thoughts and feelings, at the end of the school year. It will take 15 minutes to do and you may have already completed the questionnaire at the start of the school year.
- a researcher might sit in and watch a CRC lesson or group mentoring session.
- a discussion on your own, or with some other pupils about the CRC lessons or mentoring, including what you learnt, liked and didn't like. This will take between 30-45 minutes and will be led by a NatCen researcher.

What will happen to the information I give?

- We will write a report about what we find out from all schools and pupils about what is good or needs to be changed about the CRC Project. We won't use your name or any information that could identify you or your school.
- The questionnaire answers will help us know if the CRC Project supports pupils. The answers will be kept so that researchers can use it in the future.
- The discussions will be audio recorded, so we remember what all pupils said.
- We will not tell anyone what you have said, including your teachers. If you tell us something that makes us worried for you or someone else, we might have to tell someone.

Do I have to take part?

No, it's up to you. If you don't want to take part, you don't have to. You can stop taking part at any time. You will still get to take part in the CRC lessons, even if you don't want to be involved in the research.

When and where will this happen?

The activities will take place at your school. Your teacher will tell you when.

Questions: For more information, visit www.natcen.ac.uk/CRC or ask your teacher.

Thank you for your help.

School information sheet

NatCen
Social Research that works for society

Confident and Resilient Children (CRC) Project Evaluation

The **Youth Endowment Fund** (YEF) has funded the **National Centre for Social Research** (NatCen) to carry out an evaluation of the Confident Resilient Children (CRC) Project during 2021/22. The CRC Project is delivered across Birmingham primary schools and aims to help children to make good decisions, friendships and develop ways to build their self-confidence.

What does the evaluation aim to find out?

- How the CRC Project is delivered, including whether it is being delivered as intended
- How schools, teachers, mentors and pupils experience and view the CRC Project
- Whether the CRC Project is achieving its intended outcomes

The findings will help **Titan Partnership and their delivery partners, Lime and Emerge Leadership,** to shape future delivery and inform the decision on scaling up the CRC Project.

What does taking part in the evaluation involve for your school?

- **Pre-and post-questionnaire for pupils**. You will be asked to administer an online questionnaire to all Year 5 and 6 pupils before the start of the project in September/October 2021 and at the end of the project in June/July 2022. The questionnaire is age-appropriate, child-friendly and standardised. It will take approximately 15 minutes to complete.
- **School visits**. A NatCen researcher will visit your school to carry out:
    - An observation of a Choices lesson or mentoring session
    - A group discussion with pupils participating in the Choices lesson or mentoring

  The school visits will be arranged at a time and date that is convenient for your school in February/March or June 2022. Participation in the research activities is voluntary and confidential.
- **Interview with a teacher** delivering the Choices lesson or a short **interview with a pupil** about the 1-1 mentoring. This will take place by telephone or MS Teams.
- **Interview with CRC Champions**. NatCen will carry out a short telephone interview with your school's CRC Champion in June 2022.
- **Parent interviews**. NatCen will carry out telephone interviews with 10 parents of Year 5 and Year 6 pupils in June 2022. NatCen may ask your school to circulate a letter to 1 or 2 parents, inviting them to take part. Parents will contact NatCen directly to take part.

What information will be collected?

NatCen will ask you to share the following information about Year 5 and 6 pupils participating in the CRC Project so we know who took part:[57]

- Pupil name
- Gender
- Date of birth
- Ethnicity
- Unique Pupil Number (UPN)

At the end of the project we will also ask you to share: Pupil attendance to Choices lessons, so we can take account of attendance in the analysis.

The CRC Project team will share the questionnaire data with NatCen. NatCen will analyse the answers to assess the progress made.

Group discussions and interviews will be audio-recorded, with participants' permission, so that NatCen has an accurate record of what has been said.

All data will be stored securely and only NatCen researchers will be able to see it.

What if pupils and parents don't want their information to be shared?

Participation in all evaluation activities is voluntary. NatCen will provide schools with a parent and pupil information sheet. Parents will be given the option to withdraw their child from the evaluation before your school shares pupil details with us. Details of pupils whose parents have withdrawn them should not be shared with NatCen. Their participation in the CRC Project will not be affected.

What will happen to the information collected?

The information gathered will be analysed and used to write a report of the evaluation findings for the YEF. The report will be available online. Pupil, teacher and school names or any other identifiable details will NOT be included in the report.

The YEF was set up by the Home Office as an independent charity to fund, support and evaluate programmes and partnerships across England and Wales to reduce youth crime and violence. After the evaluation, the pupil questionnaire answers will be archived and may be linked to government datasets, including their education, criminal justice and other administrative data. This will allow researchers to assess the long term benefits of the CRC Project. This a requirement of all YEF funded projects and an opportunity to test what works to reduce youth offending. The data will be used for research purposes only. The dataset will be stored in the Office for National Statistics (ONS) secure research archive.

[57] NatCen will provide a link to a secure system for uploading pupil details as well as a template for populating the information. Please do not send pupil details via email.

What happens next?

If your school is happy to take part in the evaluation, please read and sign the Memorandum of Understanding provided to you by the CRC Project team.

GDPR and data security

While the study is being conducted, NatCen is the data controller. Once this evaluation has ended and the data is transferred to Department for Education (DfE) in January 2023, YEF will be the data controller and DfE will be the data processor. When the data is deposited at the Office for National Statistics (ONS) archive, YEF will be the data controller and ONS will be the data processor. The data controller is responsible for deciding the purpose and legal basis for managing the data.

The legal basis is legitimate interest. This means that we believe there is a good reason for us to collect and manage this data. And that this data is needed to evaluate and learn about the CRC Project. Using this data won't interfere with individuals' interests, rights or freedoms. For more information on how NatCen stores and handles data, please visit www.natcen.ac.uk/CRC. Once the data has been stored in the archive, the legal basis for processing data will be public task.

Who are NatCen

NatCen is an independent research organisation working to improve people's lives through research. You can find out more about us by visiting www.natcen.ac.uk.

What do I contact if I have questions?

You can contact the research team at CRCevaluation@natcen.ac.uk or on 0808 168 1503.

The NatCen research team: Miranda Phillips Research Director; Eliza Garwood Senior Researcher; Hannah Woodbridge Researcher

Teacher information sheet

NatCen
Social Research that works for society

Confident and Resilient Children (CRC) Project– Research Study

Information for teachers

About the research

The **Youth Endowment Fund** (YEF) has funded the **National Centre for Social Research** (NatCen) to carry out an evaluation of the Confident Resilient Children (CRC) Project during 2021/22. The research aims to find out:

- How the CRC Project is delivered, including whether it is being delivered as intended
- How schools, teachers, mentors and pupils experience and view the CRC Project
- Whether the CRC Project is achieving its intended outcomes

The findings will help **Titan Partnership and their delivery partners, Lime and Emerge Leadership,** to shape future delivery and inform the decision on scaling up the CRC Project.

What does taking part in this research involve?

Taking part involves a 45 minute interview with a NatCen researcher. Interviews will take place in **February/March 2022 or June 2022**, and may be at the school, or can be arranged by telephone or MS Teams. You can choose a date and time that is convenient for you.

What is the interview about?

We would like to speak with you about:

- Your experiences of training you received to deliver the CRC Project
- Your experiences of delivering the CRC Project
- Suggestions for improvements to the CRC Project

What will happen to the information collected?

The information will be analysed and used to write a report of the research findings for the YEF. The report will be available online. The report will not include any names of children, parents or schools or any other identifiable details.

After this research has finished, all the quantitative pupil data will be stored for future research. The data may also be linked to government datasets, including education, criminal justice and other administrative data, to research the long-term outcomes of the CRC Project. This data will be used for research purposes only. The data will be stored in the Office for National Statistics secure research archive.

How long will the data be kept?

NatCen will permanently delete all data after the CRC Project evaluation ends, and by January 2023 at the latest. After the research has finished, YEF will archive the data for future research and it will be stored indefinitely.

We will treat the information we collect in the strictest confidence under the UK General Data Protection Regulation. The information collected will be used for research purposes only. To find out about how NatCen will use the information and data you can visit www.natcen.ac.uk/CRC.

Who do I contact if I have questions?

If you are unsure about taking part, or want more information, visit www.natcen.ac.uk/CRC or contact the NatCen research team on 0808 168 1503 or CRCevaluation@natcen.ac.uk

Mentor information sheet

NatCen
Social Research that works for society

Confident and Resilient Children (CRC)Project – Research Study

Information for mentors

About the research

The **Youth Endowment Fund** (YEF) has funded the **National Centre for Social Research** (NatCen) to carry out an evaluation of the Confident Resilient Children (CRC) Project during 2021/22. The research aims to find out:

- How the CRC Project is delivered, including whether it is being delivered as intended
- How schools, teachers, mentors and pupils experience and view the CRC Project
- Whether the CRC Project is achieving its intended outcomes

The findings will help **Titan Partnership and their delivery partners, Lime and Emerge Leadership,** to shape future delivery and inform the decision on scaling up the CRC Project.

What does taking part in this research involve?

Taking part involves a 45 minute interview with a NatCen researcher. Interviews will take place in **February/March 2022 or June 2022,** and may be at the school, or can be arranged by telephone or MS Teams. You can choose a date and time that is convenient for you.

What is the interview about?

We would like to speak with you about:

- Your experience as a mentor for Emerge Leadership and training you have received
- Your experiences of delivering the Postcode to the Globe programme
- Suggestions for improvements to the mentoring programme and CRC Project

What happens next?

If you are happy to be involved, please contact NatCen on 0808 168 1503 or CRCevaluation@natcen.ac.uk. NatCen will then arrange an interview with you. If you do not wish to take part, your role with Emerge will not be affected.

You will receive a **£30 Love2Shop voucher** as a thank you, which NatCen will email to you after the interview.

What will happen to the information collected?

The information will be analysed and used to write a report of the research findings for the YEF. The report will be available online. The report will not include any names of children, parents, mentors or schools or any other identifiable details.

After this research has finished, all the quantitative pupil data will be stored for future research. The data may also be linked to government datasets, including education, criminal justice and other administrative data, to research the long-term outcomes of the CRC Project. This data will be used for research purposes only. The data will be stored in the Office for National Statistics secure research archive.

How long will the data be kept?

NatCen will permanently delete all data after the CRC Project evaluation ends, and by January 2023 at the latest. After the research has finished, YEF will archive the data for future research and it will be stored indefinitely.

We will treat the information we collect in the strictest confidence under the UK General Data Protection Regulation. The information collected will be used for research purposes only. To find out about how NatCen will use the information and data you can visit www.natcen.ac.uk/CRC.

Who do I contact if I have questions?

For more information, visit www.natcen.ac.uk/CRC or contact the NatCen research team on 0808 168 1503 or CRCevaluation@natcen.ac.uk

1.2 Topic guides

CRC Champion/Teacher interview

Evaluation of Confident Resilient Children (CRC) Project

Topic guide for CRC Champion/Teacher Interviews

Aim of the interview:

The aims of the interviews with CRC Champions/Teachers are to explore their:

1. understanding of the CRC project and experience of initial training
2. CRC project delivery to date and experiences of delivery
3. perceived outcomes for pupils and teachers
4. suggestions for improvement

The topic guide:

This guide sets out topics and questions to cover during interviews. The guide does not contain follow-up probes and questions like 'why', 'when', and 'how', etc., as participants' contributions will be explored in this way, as far as is feasible, during the 45-minute interview. Researchers will use prompts and probes to understand how and why views, behaviours and experiences have arisen.

Introduction

- Introduce yourself and NatCen Social Research
- Introduce the study:
    - Funded by Youth Endowment Fund (YEF)
    - Overall aim is to explore how participating schools, staff and pupils feel about CRC and how the project is delivered in schools
    - Findings will help shape future delivery.
- We would like to have a conversation about the CRC project running in your school during the 2021-2022 academic year, and your views and experiences of it, so there are no right or wrong answers. [For interviewer: this evaluation is only asking about 2021-22, but participants may talk about changes over time]

- During the interview we will discuss topics such as:
    - Training
    - Delivery of choices and how this went in practice
    - The mentoring component of the CRC programme
    - Outcomes for pupils, teachers and the school
- Participation is voluntary – you can choose to have a break at any time or not to discuss any topic.
- Digital recording – We will be audio-recording the interview, so we have an accurate record of what is said. Only the research team will have access to the recordings. Check OK.
- Data protection – Data kept securely in accordance with GDPR.
- How we'll report findings – we will not mention your name, or any names of people or places you mention in report. However, due to the small number of participating schools your views may be identifiable. A report summarising what everyone tells us will be shared with the CRC team and YEF.
- Disclosure – everything you tell us will be confidential. If you tell me something which suggests you or someone else is at serious risk of harm, I will have to report it to the NatCen Disclosure board, who would decide if an authority should be informed.
- Reminder of interview length - will last 45 minutes. Check OK.
- Any questions/concerns?
- Permission to start recording

1. Background and context [5 min]

Aim: To gather background information on the participant, check their understanding of CRC and understand the school's reasons for participation

- Current role and responsibilities at school
- Their involvement with CRC project
    - How project is referred to among staff/pupils
    - How long has school been working with CRC project
- Reasons for school taking part in CRC project
- How would they describe the goal of the CRC project
    - What are the aims

      What it involves

2. CRC teacher training [5 min]

Aim: To explore school's participation in training and views of it

- What training have they received to deliver Choices
    - Initial training
    - Resources - guidance materials, resources (e.g., The Lab, the teacher app)
    - Ongoing training and support (e.g., The Lab, the teacher app)
- Who attended CRC project training from school
    - What are their roles
- Views on training
    - What they learnt
    - [For teachers only] Did it prepare them for delivering the Choices sessions
    - [For CRC Champions only] Did it prepare them to oversee the CRC programme
    - What worked well / less well
    - Suggestions for improvements

3. Delivery of Choices (universal) programme [15 min]

Aim: To explore delivery to date, participant's views on delivery and available support

- Overview of delivery to date for Y5/Y6
        - Check all Y5 / Y6 pupils took part (if not reasons why)
    - Were parents informed and how
        - If a meeting was held, was this helpful
    - Number of sessions
    - Frequency
    - When sessions took place (e.g., during which lesson)
    - Average length
- What a typical session looks like for Y5/Y6
    - Whether Choices session followed initial plan
    - Any ground rules set

  - Any adaptations made and the reasons for these
  - How Choices session is different from regular lesson
- Views on content
  - Views on content of Choices lessons
  - Views on stories
  - The extent to which pupils engaged with content and sessions
- Views on resources
  - Teacher's resources, incl. Teacher app and The Lab
  - Pupils' resources, incl. Student app
  - How well did teachers/pupils engage with resources
  - Any challenges
- Barriers and facilitators to delivery of Choices sessions
  - What works well
  - What works less well
- Views on support for teachers
  - Type of support provided
  - Who from
  - Whether support was useful
  - Any additional support needed
- Suggestions for improvements to Choices sessions

4. Delivery of Postcode to the Globe (targeted) programme [5 min]

Aim: To explore delivery to date, the school's process for selecting pupils and views on delivery

- What they know about the mentoring sessions
- Process for selecting pupils for group and individual mentoring
  - What was the process
  - Who was involved
  - Communication with pupils/parents
  - What worked well / less well

- Were the 'right' pupils selected
- Suggestions for improvements

- Views on mentors and mentoring sessions
- Pupils' feedback on sessions
- Suggestions for improvements

5. Overseeing CRC programme [5 mins]

Aim: To explore delivery to date, participant's views on delivery and available support [CRC Champions only]

- Overview of delivery of CRC programme to date [thinking about the programme as a whole]
  - Extent to which Choices and Mentoring components work together
  - What went well
  - Any challenges
- Views on support for CRC Champions
  - Type of support provided
  - Who from
  - Whether support was useful
  - Any additional support needed
- Suggestions for improvements to CRC programme

6. Perceived outcomes [10 min]

Aim: To explore intended and unintended outcomes for pupils and teachers

Outcomes for pupils

- Explore general outcomes for pupils [Researcher: clarify whether outcomes relate to choices and/or mentoring]
  - Decision-making
  - Relationships, including friendships
  - Behaviour
  - Attitude
  - Communication

- Resilience e.g., coping when things go wrong
- Risk of involvement in youth crime
- Any unexpected outcomes (positive/negative)

- Are there any additional outcome measures you would add
- Differences in outcomes for different pupil groups [refer to list of outcomes above]
  - Pupils who took part in Choices and/or mentoring
  - Boys and girls
  - Any other differences
  - Why it worked well for some pupils
  - Why it worked less well for some pupils

Outcomes for teachers / school

- Explore general outcomes for teachers
  - Relationships with pupils
  - Types of conversations with pupils
  - Ability to discuss difficult subjects
  - Challenging difficult behaviour
  - Teaching of other lessons
  - Any unexpected outcomes (positive/negative)
- Explore general outcomes for school
  - Identifying children in need of additional support
  - Understanding and delivery of safeguarding polices
  - Delivery of PSHE and Relationship and Sex Education curriculum
  - Any unexpected outcomes (positive/negative)

7. Final thoughts [2 min]

- Any other comments/suggestions for the CRC project

TURN OFF RECORDER

- Thank them for their time and for the helpful discussion. Stress the value of discussion in helping to shape the study
- Reiterate confidentiality and anonymity. Check whether there is anything which they would not like to be included in the write up of the findings

Mentor interview

Evaluation of Confident Resilient Children (CRC) Project

Topic guide for CRC Mentors – paired interview

Aim of the interview:

The aims of the interviews with CRC Mentors are to explore their:

1. background and training
2. understanding of the CRC project, as well as the mentoring
3. experiences of mentoring delivery to date
4. perceived outcomes for pupils, schools, mentors
5. suggestions for improvements

The topic guide:

This guide sets out topics and questions to cover during interviews. The guide does not contain follow-up probes and questions like 'why', 'when', and 'how', etc., as participants' contributions will be explored in this way, as far as is feasible, during the 45-minute interview. Researchers will use prompts and probes to understand how and why views, behaviours and experiences have arisen.

The interview will last **45 minutes.**

Participants will receive **a £30 Love2Shop e-voucher.**

Introduction

- Introduce yourself and NatCen Social Research
- Introduce the study:
    - Funded by Youth Endowment Fund (YEF)
    - Overall aim is to explore how participating schools, staff and pupils feel about CRC and how the project is delivered in schools
    - Findings will help shape future delivery.
- We would like to have a conversation about the CRC project during the 2021-2022 academic year, and specifically your views and experiences of delivering the mentoring part of it, so there are no right or wrong answers. [For interviewer: this evaluation is only asking about 2021-22, but participants may talk about changes over time]
- During the interview we will discuss topics such as:
    - Training
    - Delivery of mentoring and how this went in practice

  - The Choices component of the CRC programme
  - Outcomes for pupils and mentors

- Participation is voluntary –you can choose to have a break at any time or not to discuss any topic.
- Digital recording – We will be audio-recording the interview, so we have an accurate record of what is said. Only the research team will have access to the recordings. Check OK.
- Data protection – Data kept securely in accordance with GDPR.
- How we'll report findings – we will not mention your name, or any names of people or places you mention in report. However, due to the small number of participating mentors their views may be identifiable. A report summarising what everyone tells us will be shared with the CRC team and YEF.
- Disclosure – everything you tell us will be confidential. If you tell me something which suggests you or someone else is at serious risk of harm, I will have to report it to the NatCen Disclosure board, who would decide if an authority should be informed.
- Reminder of interview length - will last 45 minutes. Check OK.
- £30 Love to Shop voucher – sent by email, collect address at the end
- Any questions/concerns?
- Permission to start recording

1. Background and context [5 min]

Aim: To gather background information on the participant, reasons for being a mentor, check their understanding of CRC and mentoring.

- What do they do when they aren't mentoring
- How they got involved in being a mentor for Emerge Leadership
  - When they started working as a mentor for this programme
  - Reasons for involvement
  - Prior experience of working with primary school age children and/or in schools
  - Briefly - what are their main roles and responsibilities as a mentor
- How they would describe CRC project as a whole
  - What do they know about the other element of the CRC project (the Choices component)
  - How does the mentoring fit in to the project as a whole

2. Mentor training and ongoing support [10 min]

Aim: To explore mentor training, ongoing support and views of it

- What training have they received to deliver Postcode to the Globe training
    - Initial training
    - Resources – guidance materials
    - Ongoing training and support
- Views on training
    - What they learnt
    - Did it prepare them for delivering the mentoring programme
    - What worked well / less well
    - Suggestions for improvements

3. Delivery of Postcode to the Globe (targeted) programme [15 min]

Aim: To explore delivery to date and participant's views of it

- How many schools they have delivered mentoring in as part of the CRC project this academic year
    - Check if these are new schools to them
    - Check if they have delivered both group and 1-2-1 mentoring
    - Which other mentors have they worked with in these schools
- Organisation of mentoring sessions at school [Interviewer: discuss group and 1-2-1 mentoring in turn if appropriate]
    - How do they organise mentoring sessions with the school
    - Do they have a key school contact – what's their role
    - Frequency
    - Average length
    - When sessions took place (e.g., during which lesson)
    - Where it takes place – suitability of space school provides
    - Differences by school (if work across multiple schools)
- What a typical session looks like [Interviewer: discuss group and 1-2-1 mentoring in turn if appropriate]
    - Whether a plan is followed every session

  - Any adaptations made and reasons for these
  - How do the mentors work together
- Views on content
  - Views on content of mentoring programme
  - The extent to which pupils engage with content
- What's the value of external mentor
- Selection of pupils
  - Did pupils know what they were taking part in, and have a choice
  - Views on whether the 'right' pupils are selected
  - Differences across schools (if work across multiple schools)
- Barriers and facilitators to delivery of mentoring
  - What works well
  - What works less well
- Suggestions for improvement to mentoring
  - Group and 1-2-1

4. Perceived outcomes [10 min]

Aim: To explore intended and unintended outcomes for pupils and mentors

Outcomes for pupils

- Explore general outcomes for pupils [Researcher: clarify whether outcomes relate to choices and/or mentoring]
  - Decision-making
  - Relationships, including friendships
  - Behaviour
  - Attitude
  - Communication
  - Resilience e.g., coping when things go wrong
  - Risk of involvement in youth crime
  - Any unexpected outcomes (positive, negative)
- Are there any additional outcome measures you would add

- Differences in outcomes for different pupil groups [refer to list of outcomes above]
    - Pupils who took part in group/1-2-1 mentoring
    - Boys and girls
    - Any other differences
    - Why it worked well for some pupils
    - Why it worked less well for some pupils

Outcomes for participant/ mentors

- Explore general outcomes for participant / mentors
    - Listening skills
    - Coaching skills
    - Building relationships with pupils
    - Managing difficult behaviour
    - Working in schools / with school staff
    - Any unexpected outcomes (positive/negative)

5. Final thoughts [2 min]

- Any other comments/suggestions for the CRC project
- Ask them to provide their email address in order to send £30 Love2Shop voucher.

TURN OFF RECORDER

- Thank them for their time and for the helpful discussion. Stress the value of discussion in helping to shape the study
- Reiterate confidentiality and anonymity. Check whether there is anything which they would not like to be included in the write up of the findings
- **Collect email address** for £30 voucher – We will send out all vouchers in a batch end of June

Evaluation of Confident Resilient Children (CRC) Project

Topic guide for Choices (Universal offer) – pupil group discussion

Aim of the interview:

The aims of the interviews with Choices pupils are to explore their:

1. Choices project delivery to date and experiences of delivery
2. Perceived outcomes for pupils
3. Suggestions for improvement

The topic guide:

This guide sets out topics and questions to cover during interviews. The guide does not contain follow-up probes and questions like 'why', 'when', and 'how', etc., as participants' contributions will be explored in this way, as far as is feasible, during the 45-minute group interview. Researchers will use prompts and probes to understand how and why views, behaviours and experiences have arisen.

The interview will last **45 minutes.**

Introduction

- Introduce yourself and NatCen Social Research
- Introduction to researcher [NAME]
    - My name is [NAME]. I'm a researcher
- Introduction to NatCen and the study
    - I work at a place called NatCen
    - Me and my colleagues are talking to Year 5 and Year 6 pupils about what it is like taking part in the Choices lessons as part of the Confident Resilient Children programme. There are no right or wrong answers, I just want to know your thoughts and feelings.
    - Aim is to explore how schools, staff and pupils feel about the CRC programme
    - Findings will help shape lessons for other children in the future.
- Taking part is voluntary
    - Before we start, it's really important that you know that it's up to you if you talk to me today.
    - That means that you can skip any of the questions or stop taking part at any point, without needing to tell me why. You can also let me know at the end of the interview if you don't want what you said to be included in the report.

- We will also be speaking to some teachers, mentors, CRC Champions and parents. We'll write a report about what we found out, but we won't mention you or your school by name.
- I won't share what we talk about today with anyone else.
    - The only reason I might have to tell someone is if you say something that makes me worried about your or someone else's safety
    - Otherwise, I won't tell school or anyone else
- I'd like to use a tape recorder just to help me remember what we talked about.
    - Is it OK with you if I use the tape recorder?
    - I won't share the recording with school or anyone else. We'll delete it once we've talked to all the pupils and written the report
- We'll talk for up to 45 minutes
- Does that sound OK to you? Have you got any questions for me before we start?
- Ask for permission to start recording
- **Turn on recorder and obtain verbal consent to participate**

Background and icebreaker [5 min]

Aim: To ease participants into conversation, get pupils talking about themselves and their schoolwork

Background of children

- Age/School year
- Favourite lessons at school
- What you like to do in their spare time

2. Delivery of Choices (universal) programme [20 min]

Aim: To explore participants' experiences of delivery

- Describe Choices to me
- What happens in a normal Choices lesson
    - Any activities
    - How long do lessons last
    - When do lessons happen
    - Is that the same every week
- Any ground rules
    - What rules

- Does everyone follow the rules
- Are the rules good/useful

- Overview of reading the comic/Marcus'/ Kwan's story
- DEVICE: iPad, laptop, smartboard, something else – is it the same every week
- Who do you read it with – do you always read it with them
- Did you like Marcus'/Kwan's story
    - If yes, which part of the story
    - Which characters
- Could you relate to the stories/characters
- Anything you didn't like about Marcus'/Kwan's story

- Anything that didn't go well in Choices lesson
    - Examples
    - If yes, did the teacher do anything to fix it

3. Perceptions of Choices [15 min]

Aim: To explore participants' views on Choices programme

- Thoughts about Choices lessons in general
- Which activities did you like / enjoy (and why)
- Which activities did you not like / not enjoy (and why)
- How did you feel in the sessions
    - Comfortable
    - Uncomfortable/worried
- Was there anything you didn't understand

- Views on role of/support from teacher
    - What did they do
    - How did they help
    - Could they have helped more

- Choices compared to other lessons
  - Similarities/differences
  - Do you enjoy them more/less
- Anything that would make the lessons better

4. Perceived outcomes [5 min]

Aim: To explore intended and unintended outcomes for pupils

- What have you learned from Choices lessons / what do you remember
- Any changes to the way you behave
  - In school
    - Lesson time
    - Playground
    - Relationship with teacher
    - Relationships with other pupils
  - Out of school
    - At home
    - Relationships with siblings or other family members
- Any changes to the way you make decisions
    - In school
    - Out of school
- Any changes to the way you think about yourself

5. Final thoughts [2 min]

- Anything else to say about Choices sessions
- What lessons do you have next / what are you doing after school

TURN OFF RECORDER

- Thank them for their time and for the helpful discussion

- We'll be writing a report about what we found out, but you or their school won't be named in the report
- If you have any questions about the research, you can ask Mr/Ms [key adult / CRC Champion] to get in touch with us

Group mentoring pupil focus group

Evaluation of Confident Resilient Children (CRC) Project

Topic guide for Group Mentoring - pupil group discussion

Aim of the interview:

The aims of the interviews with group mentoring pupils are to explore:

1. Mentoring delivery to date and experiences of delivery
2. Perceived outcomes for pupils
3. Suggestions for improvement

The topic guide:

This guide sets out topics and questions to cover during interviews. The guide does not contain follow-up probes and questions like 'why', 'when', and 'how', etc., as participants' contributions will be explored in this way, as far as is feasible, during the 45-minute group interview. Researchers will use prompts and probes to understand how and why views, behaviours and experiences have arisen.

The interview will last **45 minutes.**

Introduction

- Introduce yourself and NatCen Social Research
  - Introduction to researcher [NAME]
    - My name is [NAME]. I'm a researcher
  - Introduction to NatCen and the study
    - I work at a place called NatCen
    - Me and my colleagues are talking to Year 5 and Year 6 pupils about what it is like taking part in the group mentoring as part of the Confident Resilient Children programme. There are no right or wrong answers, I just want to know your thoughts and feelings.
    - Aim is to explore how schools, staff and pupils feel about the CRC programme
    - Findings will help shape lessons for other children in the future.
  - Taking part is voluntary
    - Before we start, it's really important that you know that it's up to you if you talk to me today.
    - That means that you can skip any of the questions or stop taking part at any point, without needing to tell me why. You can also let me know at the end of the interview if you don't want what you said to be included in the report.
  - We will also be speaking to some teachers, mentors, CRC Champions and parents. We'll write a report about what we found out, but we won't mention you or your school by name.
  - I won't share what we talk about today with anyone else.

  - The only reason I might have to tell someone is if you say something that makes me worried about your or someone else's safety
  - Otherwise, I won't tell school or anyone else
- I'd like to use a tape recorder just to help me remember what we talked about.
  - Is it OK with you if I use the tape recorder?
  - I won't share the recording with school or anyone else. We'll delete it once we've talked to all the pupils and written the report
- We'll talk for up to 45 minutes
- Does that sound OK to you? Have you got any questions for me before we start?
- Ask for permission to start recording

Turn on recorder and obtain verbal consent to participate

6. Background and icebreaker [5 min]

Aim: To ease participants into conversation, get pupils talking about themselves and their schoolwork

- Background of children
  - Age/School year
  - Favourite lessons at school
  - What you like to do in your spare time

7. Delivery of group mentoring programme [15 min]

Aim: To explore participants' experiences of delivery

- What were you told about mentoring before you started
  - Who told you
  - How did you feel about mentoring before you started

- Describe mentoring to me
- What happens in a mentoring session
  - How long does each mentoring session last
  - When does mentoring happen
  - Where does mentoring happen – any interruptions
  - Is that the same every week

- Any ground rules
    - What rules
    - Does everyone follow the rules
    - Are the rules good/useful
- What activities
    - What activity did you like / enjoy (and why)
    - What activity did you not like / not enjoy (and why)
    - Do you know what the activities were meant to help you with *[interviewer follow up on specific activities named]*
- Anything gone wrong in mentoring session
    - If yes, was anything done to fix this

8. Role of mentor(s) [8-10 min]

Aim: To explore participants' interactions with and perceptions of their mentor(s)

- Role of mentor(s)
    - What do they do
    - How do they help
- What do(es) their mentor(s) do well
- Anything their mentor(s) could do better

9. Perceptions of group mentoring [10 min]

Aim: To explore participants' views on group mentoring

- Thoughts about group mentoring generally
    - Likes
    - Dislikes
- How did you feel in the sessions generally
    - Comfortable
    - Uncomfortable
    - Anything you didn't understand
- Anything that would make the mentoring sessions better

10.Perceived outcomes [5 min]

Aim: To explore intended and unintended outcomes for pupils

- What have you learned from group mentoring / what do you remember
    - Do you use what you learned in mentoring in other lessons?
    - Do you use what you learned outside school/ at home / with friends / with family?
- Any changes to the way you behave
    - In school
        - Lesson time
        - Playground
        - Relationship with teacher
        - Relationships with other pupils
    - Out of school
        - At home
        - Relationships with siblings or other family members
- Any changes to the way you make decisions
    - In school
    - Out of school
- Any changes to the way you think about yourself

11.Final thoughts [2 min]

- Anything else to say about group mentoring
- What lessons do you have next / what are you doing after school

TURN OFF RECORDER

- Thank them for their time and for the helpful discussion
- We'll be writing a report about what we found out, but you or their school won't be named in the report
- If you have any questions about the research, you can ask Mr/Ms [key adult / CRC Champion] to get in touch with us

Evaluation of Confident Resilient Children (CRC) Project

Topic guide for 1:1 Mentoring Pupils (single or paired interview)

Aim of the interview:

The aims of the interviews with 1-1 mentoring pupils are to explore their:

1. Mentoring delivery to date and experiences of delivery
2. Perceived outcomes for pupils
3. Suggestions for improvement

The topic guide:

This guide sets out topics and questions to cover during interviews. The guide does not contain follow-up probes and questions like 'why', 'when', and 'how', etc., as participants' contributions will be explored in this way, as far as is feasible, during the 30-minute interview. Researchers will use prompts and probes to understand how and why views, behaviours and experiences have arisen.

The interview will last **30 minutes.**

Introduction

- Introduce yourself and NatCen Social Research
  - Introduction to researcher [NAME]
    - My name is [NAME]. I'm a researcher
  - Introduction to NatCen and the study
    - I work at a place called NatCen
    - Me and my colleagues are talking to Year 5 and Year 6 pupils about what it is like taking part in the mentoring as part of the Confident Resilient Children programme. There are no right or wrong answers, I just want to know your thoughts and feelings.
    - Aim is to explore how schools, staff and pupils feel about mentoring
    - Findings will help shape how other children receive mentoring in the future.
  - Taking part is voluntary
    - Before we start, it's really important that you know that it's up to you if you talk to me today.
    - That means that you can skip any of the questions or stop taking part at any point, without needing to tell me why. You can also let me know at the end of the interview if you don't want what you said to be included in the report.
  - We will also be speaking to some teachers, mentors, CRC Champions and parents. We'll write a report about what we found out, but we won't mention you or your school by name.

- I won't share what we talk about today with anyone else.
  - The only reason I might have to tell someone is if you say something that makes me worried about your or someone else's safety
  - Otherwise, I won't tell school or anyone else
- I'd like to use a tape recorder just to help me remember what we talked about.
  - Is it OK with you if I use the tape recorder?
  - I won't share the recording with school or anyone else. We'll delete it once we've talked to all the pupils and written the report
- We'll talk for up to 30 minutes
- Does that sound OK to you? Have you got any questions for me before we start?
- Ask for permission to start recording

Turn on recorder and obtain verbal consent to participate

1. Background and icebreaker [3 min]

Aim: To ease participant into conversation, get pupil(s) talking about themselves and their schoolwork

- Background of children
  - Age/School year
  - Favourite lessons at school
  - What you like to do in your spare time

2. Delivery of 1-1 mentoring programme [10 min]

Aim: To explore participant(s) experiences of delivery

- What were you told about mentoring before you started
  - Who told you
  - How did you feel about mentoring before you started
- Describe mentoring to me
- What happens in a mentoring session
  - Any activities
  - How long does each mentoring session last
  - When does mentoring happen
  - Where does mentoring happen – any interruptions
  - Is that the same every week
- What activities

- What activity did you like / enjoy (and why)
- What activity did you not like / not enjoy (and why)

- Anything gone wrong in mentoring session
  - If yes, was anything done to fix this

3. Role of mentor(s) [5-8 min]

Aim: To explore participant's interactions with and perceptions of their mentor(s)

- Role of mentor(s)
  - What do they do
  - How do they help
- What do(es) their mentor(s) do well
- Anything their mentor(s) could do better

4. Perceptions of 1-1 mentoring [5 min]

Aim: To explore participant's views on 1-1 mentoring

- Thoughts about mentoring in general
  - Likes
  - Dislikes
- How did you feel in the sessions generally

  - Comfortable
  - Uncomfortable
  - Anything you didn't understand
- Anything that would make the mentoring sessions better

5. Perceived outcomes [5 min]

Aim: To explore intended and unintended outcomes for pupils

- What have you learned from 1-1 mentoring / what do you remember
  - Do you use what you learned in mentoring in other lessons?
  - Do you use what you learned outside school/ at home / with friends / with family?

- Any changes to the way you behave / feel
- In school
    - Lesson time
    - Playground
    - Relationship with teacher
    - Relationships with other pupils
- Out of school
    - At home
    - Relationships with siblings or other family members

- Any changes to the way you make decisions
    - In school
    - Out of school
- Any changes to the way you think about themselves

6. Final thoughts [2 min]

- Anything else to say about 1-1 mentoring
- What lessons do you have next / what are you doing after school

TURN OFF RECORDER

- Thank them for their time and for the helpful discussion
- We'll be writing a report about what we found out, but you or their school won't be named in the report
- If you have any questions about the research, you can ask Mr/Ms [key adult / CRC Champion] to get in touch with us

Appendix B – Quantitative data collection and analysis

1.1 Quantitative data linkage and preparation – additional details

We obtained linked pre- and post-intervention outcome data from Lime, including pupil survey data and administrative data on attendance.

As individual pseudonymised identifiers were not created during data collection, the pre- and post-intervention survey data was matched using Google's OpenRefine probabilistic data linkage software. The following variables were used in matching:

- post_name
- post_school_name_postcode
- post_school_year_q
- post_birth_month_q
- post_birth_day_q

Lime linked pupil survey data to the attendance data using a combination of

- A three-character cohort code (based on a pupil's school and year group)
- The name of the pupil in the pupil-level attendance spreadsheets provided to schools
- The Google Forms data and time stamp from the pupil surveys

Data preparation

The NatCen team received this data in a linked format and performed some additional data cleaning and preparation.

We received a wide dataset with 1,035 observations. This included data from 12 schools. We performed initial checks on the data, and deleted observations for the following reasons:

- With missing data for the eval_optout variable (as we cannot be sure they did not opt out) – 1 observation
- Without Unique Pupil Numbers (UPN) – 8 observations
- Duplicates by person_ID (ID generated by Lime) (deleted all observations of duplicate pairs/triplets) – 20 observations
- Duplicates by UPN (deleted all observations of duplicate pairs/triplets) – 9 observations

This left a sample of 997 pupils. As a further check, we investigated differences in responses in reported demographic and personal characteristics at baseline and endline. We observed that:

- 39 pupils' survey-reported gender did not match at baseline and endline

- 290 pupils' survey-reported ethnicity did not match at baseline and endline
- 283 pupils' survey-reported names did not match at baseline and endline
- 19 pupils' survey-reported birth year did not match at baseline and endline
- <10 pupils' survey reported birth month did not match at baseline and endline
- 13 pupils' survey reported birth day did not match at baseline and endline

A manual check of the data indicated the following:

- Differences in name were due to different spellings or the addition/omission of middle/last names.
- Differences in gender showed no clear pattern. Differences in ethnicity also showed no clear pattern, although results suggest that many pupils used the open text box to describe their ethnicity in one or both surveys, and did so slightly differently in each wave. When deriving gender and ethnicity-related covariates, we report pupils with different results at baseline and endline as a separate category.
- Differences in birth dates again show no clear pattern, although we suspect that they are a result of error by pupils completing the surveys.

None of these discrepancies were considered serious enough to merit the deletion of observations from the dataset, and so we retained all 997 observations for analysis.

1.2 Quantitative analysis – additional details

1.2.1 Pupil outcomes: universal vs targeted group

We carried out additional analysis to further explore the differences between the universal and targeted group. We computed the pre-post change for those receiving universal and targeted support, separately (see Tables A1 and A2). We observe that, for the targeted group (Table A1), wellbeing scores, overall MAMF scores, and emotional difficulties scores, all significantly improved between baseline and endline, with these differences being small to moderate. Pre-post changes in behavioural difficulties and resilience were not statistically significant.

Table A1: Comparison of outcome scores at baseline and endline for pupils receiving targeted support

Outcome	Baseline		Endline		Mean pre-post difference	t-statistic	p-value	Standardised mean difference	N
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD					
Stirling Child Wellbeing Scale	31.13	7.19	35.39	7.60	4.26	6.46	0.00	0.59	150
Me and My Feelings	15.53	4.54	13.79	5.03	-1.74	-4.67	0.00	-0.38	150
MAMF Emotional Difficulties	10.52	3.52	9.13	3.59	-1.39	-4.94	0.00	-0.40	150
MAMF Behavioural Difficulties	5.01	2.51	4.66	2.48	-0.35	-1.69	0.09	-0.14	150
Student Resilience Survey	50.17	10.41	51.40	9.87	1.23	1.38	0.17	0.12	150

However, for those receiving the universal component only (Table A2), we observe that wellbeing and resilience actually deteriorated (scores decreased over the trial period), while behavioural difficulties significantly increased. However, these differences are all small, according to standardised mean differences. Overall, MAMF and emotional difficulties scores did not significantly change.

Table A2: Comparison of outcome scores at baseline and endline for pupils receiving universal support only

Outcome	Baseline		Endline		Mean pre-post difference	t-statistic	p-value	Standardised mean difference	N
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD					
Stirling Child Wellbeing Scale	44.61	6.84	43.38	7.28	-1.23	-5.15	0.00	-0.18	847
Me and My Feelings	9.75	4.80	9.85	4.85	0.10	0.67	0.50	0.02	847
MAMF Emotional Difficulties	6.85	3.51	6.76	3.50	-0.09	-0.79	0.43	-0.02	847
MAMF Behavioural Difficulties	2.90	2.09	3.09	2.22	0.19	2.55	0.01	0.09	847
Student Resilience Survey	60.83	8.31	59.38	8.63	-1.45	-4.85	0.00	-0.17	847

1.2.2 Pupil outcomes: regression analysis

Table 18 in the main body of the report presents the regression analysis. Table A3 corresponds with Table 18 and gives the standard errors.

Table A3: Full regression results of endline outcome scores on baseline outcome scores and covariates, including standard errors

	(1) SCWBS (endline)	(2) MAMF (endline)	(3) MAMF Behavioural Difficulties (endline)	(4) MAMF Emotional Difficulties (endline)	(5) SRS (endline)
SCWBS baseline	0.53***				
	(0.03)				
MAMF baseline		0.57***			
		(0.03)			
MAMF Behavioural Difficulties baseline			0.50***		
			(0.03)		
MAMF Emotional Difficulties baseline				0.54***	
				(0.03)	

SRS baseline					0.48***
					(0.04)
Receives targeted component	-0.73	0.53	0.52**	0.23	-2.71***
	(0.73)	(0.47)	(0.23)	(0.24)	(1.02)
Number of Choices sessions attended (4-11)	0.31	-0.10	-0.05	-0.05	0.24
	(0.45)	(0.20)	(0.10)	(0.16)	(0.36)
Attends all 11 Choices sessions	-0.13	-0.38	-0.08	-0.31	0.12
	(0.85)	(0.36)	(0.19)	(0.38)	(0.87)
Year 6	0.83**	-0.28	0.03	-0.30	0.62
	(0.42)	(0.22)	(0.13)	(0.19)	(0.67)
Gender: I'm a girl	-0.59	0.56*	-0.42***	0.98***	0.47
	(0.43)	(0.31)	(0.13)	(0.18)	(0.51)
Gender different at baseline/ endline	-0.50	0.23	-0.14	0.39	0.24
	(1.35)	(0.94)	(0.42)	(0.58)	(1.59)
Ethnicity: Arab	-0.85	-0.08	0.28	-0.31	-1.71
	(1.41)	(0.79)	(0.26)	(0.71)	(1.74)
Ethnicity: Bangladeshi	0.82	-0.01	-0.19	0.18	-1.18
	(0.67)	(0.50)	(0.21)	(0.30)	(0.98)
Ethnicity: Indian	0.05	0.93	0.63	0.30	-1.86
	(0.84)	(0.91)	(0.41)	(0.54)	(1.99)
Ethnicity: Black	0.17	-0.02	-0.04	-0.01	-3.42**
	(0.73)	(0.65)	(0.24)	(0.45)	(1.34)
Ethnicity: White	-0.14	0.61	0.23	0.40	-1.70*
	(0.73)	(0.46)	(0.24)	(0.27)	(1.02)
Ethnicity: mixed/multiple	-1.58*	1.31*	0.13	1.27***	-2.88**
	(0.93)	(0.75)	(0.35)	(0.48)	(1.23)
Ethnicity: other	0.70	0.20	-0.09	0.31	-0.31

	(1.15)	(0.68)	(0.35)	(0.49)	(1.22)
Ethnicity: different at baseline/ endline	-0.06	0.72**	0.38**	0.35	-1.02
	(0.61)	(0.32)	(0.16)	(0.22)	(0.73)
Constant	16.34***	5.14**	2.29**	3.23**	28.36***
	(4.84)	(2.03)	(1.03)	(1.48)	(3.90)
Observations	997	997	997	997	997
R-squared	0.36	0.39	0.31	0.39	0.30
Standard errors in parentheses					

*** p<0.01,
*<0.05,

* p<0.1

Reference groups: Receives targeted component = receives universal component only; attends 11 Choices session = attends 10 or fewer; Year 6 = Year 5, gender = “I’m a boy”; ethnicity = Pakistani

Cells suppressed due to low counts (n<10): Gender ‘other’ and ‘prefer not to say’; Ethnicity ‘prefer not to say’

1.2.3 SRS subscales

We explored SRS subscales, in line with the pilot's objective of verifying their reliability and validity with an English sample.

First, we computed means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations between individual subscales at baseline (Table4) and endline (Table A5). While bearing in mind that some subscales were scored 0-10 while others were scored 0-15, it can be observed that scores on all subscales were generally quite high, relative to the midpoint.

Pupils' scores on all subscales were significantly and positively correlated positively with one another at the 1% level, although specific correlations varied in magnitude. All subscales correlated more strongly with overall scores than with any other specific subscale, although some were more closely related than others. For instance, the communication subscale correlated most strongly with the self-esteem, empathy, and problem-solving subscales. Self-esteem was also quite strongly correlated with problem solving and goals and aspirations. Problem solving was the subscale most strongly correlated with SRS scores as a whole.

Table A4: Descriptive statistics and intercorrelations for SRS subscales at baseline

Outcome	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. SRS Total	59.23	9.46	1.00	0.52	0.77	0.77	0.61	0.81	0.62
2. SRS Peer Relationships	8.24	1.60	0.52	1.00	0.29	0.24	0.33	0.34	0.16
3. SRS Communication	12.06	2.32	0.77	0.29	1.00	0.54	0.45	0.49	0.39
4. SRS Self-Esteem	11.71	2.51	0.77	0.24	0.54	1.00	0.28	0.51	0.50
5. SRS Empathy	8.16	1.90	0.61	0.33	0.45	0.28	1.00	0.38	0.20
6. SRS Problem Solving	10.63	3.26	0.81	0.34	0.49	0.51	0.38	1.00	0.38
7. SRS Goals and Aspirations	8.43	1.83	0.62	0.16	0.39	0.50	0.20	0.38	1.00

Note: all correlations are significant at $p < .001$ (2-tailed), base = 997, positive values indicate positive correlations and negative values indicate negative correlations, columns 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 refer to their respective numbered outcomes

Table A5: Descriptive statistics and intercorrelations for SRS subscales at endline

Outcome	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. SRS Total	58.18	9.28	1.00	0.53	0.76	0.75	0.60	0.79	0.65
2. SRS Peer Relationships	8.13	1.57	0.53	1.00	0.33	0.26	0.29	0.33	0.20
3. SRS Communication	11.84	2.24	0.76	0.33	1.00	0.51	0.44	0.45	0.40
4. SRS Self-Esteem	11.53	2.48	0.75	0.26	0.51	1.00	0.27	0.47	0.53
5. SRS Empathy	7.83	1.97	0.60	0.29	0.44	0.27	1.00	0.36	0.19
6. SRS Problem Solving	10.37	3.24	0.79	0.33	0.45	0.47	0.36	1.00	0.41
7. SRS Goals and Aspirations	8.48	1.76	0.65	0.20	0.40	0.53	0.19	0.41	1.00

Note: all correlations are significant at $p < .001$ (2-tailed), base = 997, positive values indicate positive correlations and negative values indicate negative correlations, columns 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 refer to their respective numbered outcomes

Table 16 displays the McDonald's ω and Cronbach's α reliability scores for the SRS subscales. Evidence is mixed for individual subscales, although it is clear that the total SRS scale has higher internal consistency than the individual subscales. This is likely in large part due to the low number of items, but nonetheless supports our decision to use SRS as a single scale rather than individual subscales.

Table 16: Psychometric properties of SRS subscales

Variable	McDonald's ω		Cronbach's α		No. items
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	
SRS Total	0.85	0.85	0.85	0.85	15
SRS Peer Relationships	n/a	n/a	0.61	0.64	2
SRS Communication	0.55	0.54	0.51	0.48	3
SRS Self-Esteem	0.72	0.73	0.71	0.72	3
SRS Empathy	n/a	n/a	0.68	0.76	2
SRS Problem Solving	0.74	0.78	0.73	0.78	3
SRS Goals and Aspirations	n/a	n/a	0.60	0.64	2

Note: n/a = not applicable, as McDonald's ω is only be computed for scales of 3+ items

1.2.4 Outcome measures

The full set of statements included in each of the outcome measures is shown in Tables A7-A12 below, alongside the frequencies for each at baseline and endline.

Table A7: The Stirling Children's Wellbeing Scale (SCWBS) at baseline

Item	Never	Not much of the time	Some of the time	Quite a lot of the time	All of the time	Total pupils
I think good things will happen in my life	3.01%	9.13%	42.13%	29.99%	15.75%	997
I have always told the truth	0.50%	5.62%	32.40%	43.03%	18.46%	997
I've been able to make choices easily	4.21%	19.46%	38.52%	25.68%	12.14%	997
I can find lots of fun things to do	3.21%	14.14%	25.68%	28.08%	28.89%	997
I feel that I am good at some things	2.21%	8.83%	36.31%	32.20%	20.46%	997
I think lots of people care about me	5.02%	11.74%	22.87%	26.88%	33.50%	997
I like everyone I have met	2.31%	12.24%	32.90%	29.69%	22.87%	997
I think there are many things I can be proud of	2.51%	8.63%	28.59%	32.70%	27.58%	997
I've been feeling calm	4.61%	14.84%	33.10%	30.19%	17.25%	997
I've been in a good mood	2.11%	12.14%	30.99%	36.11%	18.66%	997
I enjoy what each new day brings	3.11%	14.64%	35.81%	23.77%	22.67%	997
I've been getting on well with people	1.81%	9.83%	25.78%	40.12%	22.47%	997
I always share my sweets	13.84%	16.05%	22.77%	20.76%	26.58%	997
I've been cheerful about things	2.41%	12.34%	29.09%	33.40%	22.77%	997
I've been feeling relaxed	4.41%	16.95%	32.00%	28.89%	17.75%	997

Table A8:The Stirling Children's Wellbeing Scale (SCWBS) at endline

Item	Never	Not much of the time	Some of the time	Quite a lot of the time	All of the time	Total pupils
I think good things will happen in my life	2.81%	8.22%	41.22%	33.60%	14.14%	997
I have always told the truth	0.50%	5.62%	32.40%	43.03%	18.46%	997
I've been able to make choices easily	4.21%	19.46%	38.52%	25.68%	12.14%	997
I can find lots of fun things to do	3.21%	14.14%	25.68%	28.08%	28.89%	997
I feel that I am good at some things	2.21%	8.83%	36.31%	32.20%	20.46%	997
I think lots of people care about me	5.02%	11.74%	22.87%	26.88%	33.50%	997
I like everyone I have met	2.31%	12.24%	32.90%	29.69%	22.87%	997
I think there are many things I can be proud of	2.51%	8.63%	28.59%	32.70%	27.58%	997
I've been feeling calm	4.61%	14.84%	33.10%	30.19%	17.25%	997
I've been in a good mood	2.11%	12.14%	30.99%	36.11%	18.66%	997
I enjoy what each new day brings	3.11%	14.64%	35.81%	23.77%	22.67%	997
I've been getting on well with people	1.81%	9.83%	25.78%	40.12%	22.47%	997
I always share my sweets	13.84%	16.05%	22.77%	20.76%	26.58%	997
I've been cheerful about things	2.41%	12.34%	29.09%	33.40%	22.77%	997
I've been feeling relaxed	4.41%	16.95%	32.00%	28.89%	17.75%	997

Table A9: Me And My Feelings questionnaire at baseline

Item	Never	Sometimes	Always	Total pupils
I feel lonely	40.92%	52.66%	6.42%	997
I cry a lot	38.92%	54.36%	6.72%	997
I am unhappy	24.37%	71.51%	4.11%	997
Nobody likes me	49.75%	43.73%	6.52%	997
I worry a lot	28.59%	54.76%	16.65%	997
I have problems sleeping	39.92%	39.32%	20.76%	997
I wake up in the night	23.17%	52.66%	24.17%	997
I am shy	31.09%	54.36%	14.54%	997
I feel scared	38.01%	56.47%	5.52%	997
I worry when I am at school	55.97%	38.72%	5.32%	997
I get very angry	28.28%	60.68%	11.03%	997
I lose my temper	39.72%	50.65%	9.63%	997
I hit out when I am angry	56.17%	33.90%	9.93%	997
I do things to hurt people	78.74%	19.96%	1.30%	997
I am calm	29.89%	62.99%	7.12%	997
I break things on purpose	85.36%	13.54%	1.10%	997

Table A10: Me And My Feelings questionnaire at endline

Item	Never	Sometimes	Always	Total pupils
I feel lonely	41.93%	54.56%	3.51%	997
I cry a lot	41.52%	51.45%	7.02%	997
I am unhappy	25.38%	71.11%	3.51%	997
Nobody likes me	49.55%	44.33%	6.12%	997
I worry a lot	28.69%	56.07%	15.25%	997
I have problems sleeping	42.03%	38.21%	19.76%	997
I wake up in the night	28.39%	52.16%	19.46%	997
I am shy	31.49%	54.36%	14.14%	997
I feel scared	43.23%	52.46%	4.31%	997
I worry when I am at school	54.76%	39.72%	5.52%	997
I get very angry	26.58%	61.69%	11.74%	997
I lose my temper	38.52%	51.05%	10.43%	997
I hit out when I am angry	55.17%	36.31%	8.53%	997
I do things to hurt people	76.23%	22.07%	1.71%	997
I am calm	29.29%	64.19%	6.52%	997
I break things on purpose	82.35%	15.55%	2.11%	997

Table A11: Student Resilience Survey (SRS) at baseline

Item	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	Total pupils
My friends …try and do what is right	2.11%	5.02%	20.76%	33.30%	38.82%	997
My friends …do well in school	1.50%	2.41%	15.25%	34.20%	46.64%	997
I help other people	1.50%	3.41%	19.36%	36.21%	39.52%	997
I enjoy working with other students	5.12%	8.93%	18.25%	28.18%	39.52%	997
I stand up for myself	4.11%	7.42%	15.35%	21.46%	51.65%	997
I can work out my problems	4.81%	9.43%	25.88%	32.10%	27.78%	997
I can do most things if I try	2.01%	6.01%	16.35%	32.50%	43.13%	997
There are many things that I do well	2.31%	7.72%	18.86%	35.91%	35.21%	997
I feel bad when someone gets their feelings hurt	3.41%	5.12%	13.75%	24.17%	53.56%	997
I try to understand what other people feel	4.21%	5.72%	20.36%	28.89%	40.82%	997
When I need help, I find someone to talk to	13.34%	13.74%	20.36%	22.37%	30.19%	997
I know where to go for help when I have a problem	6.62%	7.92%	18.05%	19.76%	47.64%	997
I try to work out problems by talking about them	15.75%	14.84%	21.56%	22.97%	24.87%	997
I have goals and plans for the future	4.61%	4.21%	10.83%	20.16%	60.18%	997
I think I will be successful when I grow up	3.61%	4.01%	15.45%	26.28%	50.65%	997

Table A12: Student Resilience Survey (SRS) at endline

Item	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	Total pupils
My friends …try and do what is right	2.11%	4.01%	22.47%	38.92%	32.50%	997
My friends …do well in school	1.30%	3.01%	14.94%	38.21%	42.53%	997
I help other people	0.90%	3.81%	18.56%	40.32%	36.41%	997
I enjoy working with other students	5.62%	9.03%	24.07%	30.39%	30.89%	997
I stand up for myself	3.41%	7.92%	17.95%	21.66%	49.05%	997
I can work out my problems	4.11%	10.53%	26.58%	33.30%	25.48%	997
I can do most things if I try	2.31%	5.82%	20.46%	36.21%	35.21%	997
There are many things that I do well	2.51%	5.92%	21.77%	37.61%	32.20%	997
I feel bad when someone gets their feelings hurt	3.81%	7.12%	15.85%	29.29%	43.99%	997
I try to understand what other people feel	3.71%	8.73%	22.37%	33.80%	31.39%	997
When I need help, I find someone to talk to	14.04%	14.74%	23.77%	25.38%	22.07%	997
I know where to go for help when I have a problem	7.12%	8.73%	16.65%	23.67%	43.83%	997
I try to work out problems by talking about them	14.24%	13.34%	26.78%	27.48%	18.15%	997
I have goals and plans for the future	2.41%	5.42%	9.43%	23.77%	58.98%	997
I think I will be successful when I grow up	3.21%	3.91%	16.25%	26.78%	49.85%	997